



NOVEMBER 2014 VOLUME 24 ISSUE 11

THE INTERNATIONAL FILM MAGAZINE

Sight & Sound



INTERVIEW MIKE LEIGH ON

MR. TURNER

PLUS

- SCI-FI: DAYS OF FEAR AND WONDER ● JAKE GYLLENHAAL IN 'NIGHTCRAWLER'
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Deep Focus: Birth of the Method

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Darwin's nightmares

The insidious altered states and transformations that abound in sci-fi cinema owe their genesis to the great evolutionary biologist, and each new milestone in Darwinian theory, from 'The Selfish Gene' to the Human Genome Project, provides fresh material for sci-fi filmmakers. By **Roger Luckhurst**

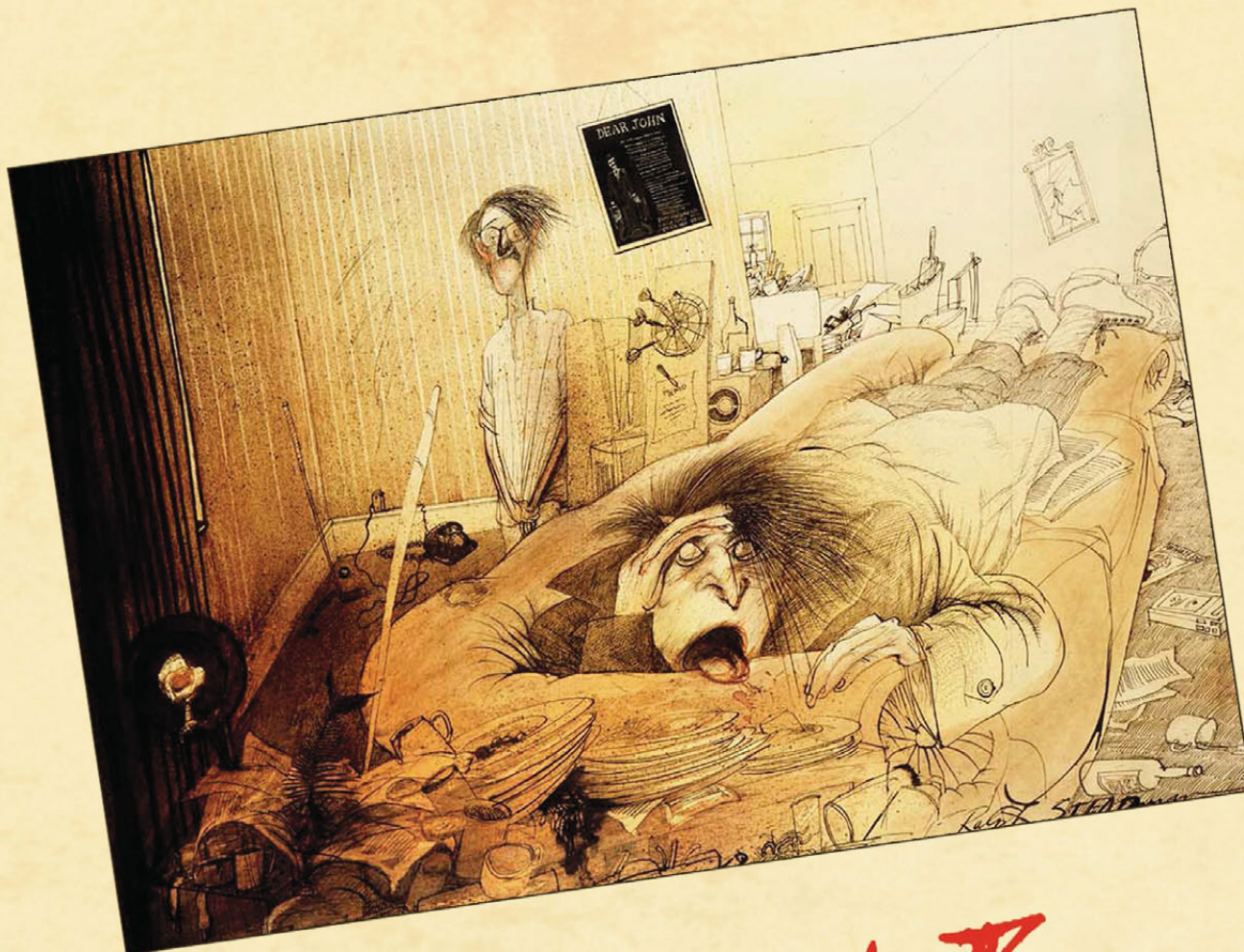
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The future is here

While much big-screen sci-fi relies on splashy effects, plenty of less ostentatious films have made a virtue of low budgets – by using the viewer's imagination to fill in the gaps, or by letting a dystopian vision of the present stand in for the future. By **Jonathan Rosenbaum**



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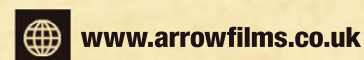
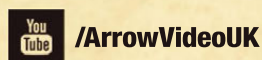
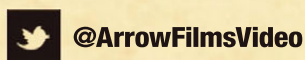


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Timothy Spall in *Mr. Turner*.
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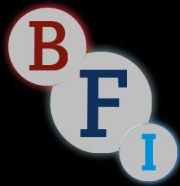


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Editorial Nick James



THE EQUALIZERS

Recently a woman curator/programmer I respect accused a film that I had just raved about of misogyny. Instead of defending the film, my immediate response was, why pick on this one? Aren't the majority of films pitched somewhere on the misogynist scale? Which, of course, doesn't get any film off the hook. So my theme this month is women in film and women in films, a theme too large for the names of my colleague and the film she complained about to be more than a distraction.

We all know that the circumstances that created and sustain Hollywood made – and make – it a playground for misogynists. Many Hollywood 'players' seem to conform to what we might call the Don Simpson model in their attitudes towards women, seeing them principally as playthings. I've long believed that it's not merely the fact that Hollywood narratives are designed to play to the fantasies of inexperienced teenage boys around the world that leads to so many prostitute characters appearing in movies. In Hollywood, it seems, happy hookers still abound, if only in the imaginations of ageing straight men. But this is not just about major studio cinema – the international films I see at festivals are usually just as stereotypically narrow in their portrayal of women, whether or not they take their lead from the dominant market leader.

It's not just about the constant sexualisation of women in films. I've done no survey but it is my impression that the majority of narratives about the family end up blaming the mother for whatever disaster has transpired. In recent years we have seen the welcome rise of the solo female protagonist (for instance, *The Hunger Games*, *Frances Ha*, *Under the Skin*, *Ida*, *Lucy* and *Two Days, One Night*), especially on TV, but the complaint is made that they're often required to "behave like men" – the opposite stereotype. All this is screamingly obvious, you might say, but it doesn't make it any less pernicious.

Now we have a study from the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California to underline that 'obvious'. There is "deep-seated discrimination and pervasive stereotyping of women and girls in the international film industry". Geena Davis, the actor and head of the Institute of Gender in Media, revealed that fewer than one-third of all speaking parts were female. Women make up only 22.5 per cent of the fiction movie workforce (and if you subtracted women producers, the one sector in which the number of women and men are more balanced, I reckon that proportion would be halved). Women are



Film theory teaches us that the male gaze is so deep-rooted in cinema as to be structural. The obvious answer to such a problem is to bring more women into filmmaking and film commentary

also more likely to be depicted in a hypersexualised manner than men, according to the report.

Sociology and psychology sit on the side and nod.

What brought this assessment to the public attention and focus it needed was the speech by Emma Watson to the UN and her HeForShe campaign, "a solidarity movement for gender equality" and an invitation to men to speak out in support of women. Given the catastrophic levels of misogyny exposed by social media, this was a smart and heartfelt counter move. One might wonder how culpable movies have been in helping to create that nasty troll hinterland. It doesn't bear thinking about, but think we must. Film theory teaches us that the male gaze is so deep-rooted in cinema as to be structural. The obvious answer to such a hard-wired problem is to bring more women into filmmaking and – lest we forget – film commentary, and to shout about them when we've got them.

Therefore, to move from the general to the particular, I will agree with anyone who thinks that there are not enough women writing for *Sight & Sound*. Though we have increased the proportion of female writers in recent years, there's still a lot more to do. We're working on it. We'll be more than happy to get vastly more introductions to and article pitches from good female writers in future. That's our modest invitation. ☺



The BFI London Film Festival runs from 8-19 October. Throughout this issue, look for the red LFF badge for coverage of films in the festival's programme. For more go to bfi.org.uk/sightandsound

IN THE FRAME

SHOCK TREATMENT



Having 'retired' from Hollywood, Steven Soderbergh is applying what he learned in cinema to his TV medical series *The Knick*

By Peter Labuza

Television might be a writer's medium, but the idiosyncratic (and allegedly "done with Hollywood") Steven Soderbergh pushes his own agenda in *The Knick*, a very distinctive medical drama. It's the turn of the 20th century at the Knickerbocker Hospital in New York's Lower East Side, where Dr John W. Thackery (a terse Clive Owen) lives in an age of technological advances but struggles to keep patients alive. The real tension, however, is between the show's writers (creators Jack Amiel and Michael Begler along with Steven Katz) and Soderbergh, who follows in the footsteps of Cary Fukunaga on *True Detective* by acting as director for the whole of the show's ten-episode run; in addition, he serves as cinematographer (alias: Peter Andrews) and editor (alias: Mary Ann Bernard). While the writers have crafted a familiar tale of double lives and moral compromises, Soderbergh's visual craft skips to its own unique beat. Television has never looked so smart.

The stakes are high – just how high is clear from early in the first episode, when Thackery and his mentor Dr Christiansen (Matt Frewer) are shown attempting a radical new C-section procedure. The tick of a clock sets the tempo for an increasingly erratic operation, with close-ups of gallons of blood gushing on to the pure white floor. The surgery is a disaster – both mother and child dead – and Christiansen puts a bullet in his head, leaving Thackery to lead the floundering institution. Throughout the series, new technologies butt up against crass practices; X-rays and plastic surgery run up against poor hygiene and unreliable electricity sources.

While Thackery's battles against death make for a fascinating examination of the perils of progress, the rest of *The Knick* has the familiar concerns of great television: class and gender issues and dark pasts (*Mad Men*'s bread and butter). Black doctor Algernon Edwards (André Holland) is rejected by the white staff; Cornelia Robertson (Juliet Rylance), a philanthropist's

Knickerbocker gory: Clive Owen wields the scalpel as Dr John W. Thackery

ON OUR
RADAR

Silent Running

The Eden Project provides the perfect setting for the botanical ark spaceships of Douglas Trumbull's 'Silent Running' (1971). The special-effects maestro's eco sci-fi classic, which inspired the design of the project's biomes, plays there on 26 October.



London International Animation Festival

Too little adventurous animation gets a theatrical release, so take advantage of the UK's largest dedicated festival (24 October-2 November at the Barbican and other venues) to catch Alé Abreu's award-winning wordless coming-of-age tale 'The Boy and the World' (right) as well as a retrospective of cameraless animator Steven Woloshen and a centenary tribute to the great Norman McLaren.





The cutting room: Dr Thackery (Owen) operates, watched by Dr Algernon Edwards (André Holland, left)

daughter struggling to turn the Knick into a social welfare beacon, finds her efforts undermined by hospital manager Herman Barrow (Jeremy Bobb), who takes every illegal side deal he can muster to keep the water running and his whorehouse bill paid. Tryingly witty dialogue ("This is madness, yet there is method in it"; "It always looks like rain if you only look at the clouds") and forced exposition blunt the characterisations.

And yet *The Knick* remains head and shoulders above television's recent outpourings. While Amiel and Begler have structured a routine drama, Soderbergh can't help wedging his personality into it. The opening frames declare his authority: a shallow-focused POV shot of Thackery's feet in white Balmorals lying crossed in an orange-hued opium den. Then Cliff Martinez's anachronistic synthesiser score kicks in, as the doctor self-injects cocaine in the back of a carriage, every detail of the procedure captured through a series of rapidly edited close-ups.

As in *Haywire* and *Side Effects*, Soderbergh mixes an oversaturated colour palette with a cool emotional tone (one reason the soapy dialogue feels so blunt). *The Knick* is fuelled by an economic understanding of shots as narrative data, so that every composition and edit feels methodical and essential. In a mid-season episode, unruly ambulance driver Tom Cleary and nun with a dark side Sister Harriet sit down at a local bar. As they finally come eye to eye, Soderbergh shoots

their conversation as Ozu-like portraiture. Later, Thackery presents a new surgery technique to a colleague after two straight days of research (plus prostitutes and cocaine); the camera circles around them in a manic handheld long take, matching the doctor's own delirious state.

Soderbergh's style isn't just a grab-bag of showy devices – his craft adds dimensions to the characters that are absent from the writing. In the pilot, Soderbergh transitions between conversations by gliding his camera in an Altmanesque tracking shot, heightening the sense of the hospital as a community. His most ambitious gambit comes at the end of the third episode: for a back-alley brawl with a drunk Edwards, he achieves a thrilling "you-are-there" feeling by attaching a camera rig close to the actor. The muted sounds bring us into the character's internal reverberations.

While his HBO miniseries *K Street* took faux-documentary tropes to Washington politics, *The Knick* feels like Soderbergh's first truly crafted television work, bringing the disciplined style of *The Girlfriend Experience* and *Contagion* to the small screen. Perhaps Soderbergh's inventive directorial choices wouldn't stand out so strongly if the writing matched his ambitions. But while "TV is the new cinema" declarations have been easily dismissed by those who prefer their moving images to have visual wit, *The Knick* finally gives that proposition some legitimacy. **S**

Krzysztof Kieslowski

The 25th anniversary of the Polish director's landmark ten-part TV series 'The Decalogue', inspired by the Ten Commandments, is celebrated at the ICA, London (27 November-9 December), along with a selection of early, lesser-known Kieslowski (right) documentaries and features.



Le Jour se lève

Another of Marcel Carné and Jacques Prévert's classic collaborations ('Les Enfants du paradis', 'Le Quai des brumes'), this poetic 1939 proto-noir (right) was included in the first ever 'S&S' Greatest Films Poll. Starring Jean Gabin as a murderer awaiting his fate, it can be seen at cinemas across the UK with all the Vichy-regime cuts now restored.



LISTOMANIA

VANISHING LADIES

David Fincher's *Gone Girl* provides cinema with its latest case of 'the mysterious missing woman' – a plot device that runs throughout film history, as this list attests.

- 1 **The Mistletoe Bough** (1904)
Percy Stow
- 2 **The Lady Vanishes** (1938, below)
Alfred Hitchcock
- 3 **Laura** (1944)
Otto Preminger
- 4 **L'Avventura** (1960)
Michelangelo Antonioni
- 5 **Picnic at Hanging Rock** (1975)
Peter Weir
- 6 **Agatha** (1979)
Michael Apted
- 7 **Frantic** (1988)
Roman Polanski
- 8 **The Vanishing** (1988)
George Sluizer
- 9 **Sleeping with the Enemy** (1991)
Joseph Ruben
- 10 **Breakdown** (1997)
Jonathan Mostow



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

DOROTHY ARZNER

'When I went to work in a studio, I took my pride and made a nice little ball of it and threw it right out the window'



The Gallery, Newcastle

A new commission from Aura Satz entitled 'Chromatic Aberration', exploring early film colour technologies, is on show from 22 October-23 November at this exhibition space dedicated to artists' moving image work which has recently opened at the Tyneside Cinema.



ALTERED SKATES

More than just a novelty, roller skates are a way of injecting grace and fluidity into film – and deeply embedded in the form's history



By Hannah McGill

Pioneered in the late 19th century, it evolved from a novelty pursuit to a mainstream entertainment in the early part of the 20th

century, hitting widespread popularity by the 1930s. A golden era of cool credibility struck in the 1970s, but pre-eminence was a challenge to sustain through the technological and entertainment onslaughts of the 80s and 90s...

The history of roller-skating tallies rather pleasingly with that of cinema, which might be one of the reasons that Paul Thomas Anderson made it a motif in a film – *Boogie Nights* (1997) – that concerns itself with changes in the movie industry. The films that are being made in *Boogie Nights* are specifically pornos, but the shift from celluloid to cheaper and more portable video technology foreshadows the fate of the wider film industry; and the film's contention that the

process entails a loss of soul and genuineness certainly reflects a tendency on the part of cinema buffs to mourn the analogue past as a paradise sacrificed to progress. *Boogie Nights* doesn't unquestioningly or unironically depict the late 1970s porn industry as Eden before the Fall (or Mount Olympus, which does provide the origin for the roller-skating goddess played by Olivia Newton-John in 1980's *Xanadu*). But it does commence with scenes of easy and joyous interaction between characters who will ultimately, through a combination of their own weaknesses and the assumptions made about them by others, be divided and destroyed. The ease and joy are encapsulated in the fluid movements of Heather Graham's 'Rollergirl', a porn star who always – even when she's working – wears skates. When we first meet her, Rollergirl is skating around a nightclub in which the film's other main characters are also congregated. The girlishness evoked by her skates, shorts, hair slides and T-shirt is compounded

Rollergirl's skating, as well as suggesting the whirring wheels of a movie projector, mimics the movement of a camera



Rolling thunder: James Caan in *Rollerball* (1975)



Roll play: Charlie Chaplin in *The Rink* (1916)

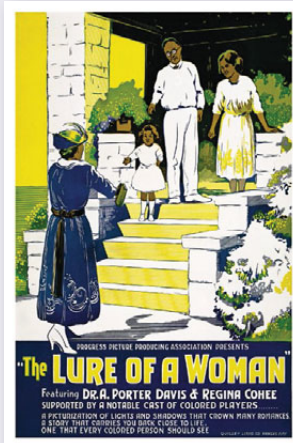
THE FIVE KEY...

BLACK MOVIE POSTERS

The depiction of African-Americans in film posters through the decades offers a fascinating reflection of the role of race in the movies – and life

By Ashley Clark

A dazzling new book from Reel Art Press, *Separate Cinema: The First 100 Years of Black Poster Art*, which is drawn from the collection of archivist John Kisch, charts the increasing presence and importance of African-Americans in film and the ways they have been depicted on posters by artists worldwide. As the critic Henry Louis Gates Jr argues in the foreword, these posters "constitute their own art form and pattern of representation, like a parallel visual universe, mirroring what an artist or a producer felt to be the dominant message about race in America that these films contained".



1 The Lure of a Woman (1921)

Though the great Oscar Micheaux is widely regarded as the key pioneer of black independent cinema, there were other trailblazers. This elegant painterly poster for Progress Picture Association's *The Lure of a Woman* shows a balanced, complex picture of black family life, challenging the era's caricatures and stereotypes.



2 The Blood of Jesus (1941)

Spencer Williams was a prolific actor, writer and director of 'race movies', with all-black casts designed for all-black audiences. The intensity of his religious classic *The Blood of Jesus* is reflected in a boldly colourful and inventive poster: check out the use of negative frames to make up the shape of the ominous cross.



On a roll: Heather Graham as the vivacious Roller Girl in *Boogie Nights* (1997)

technology, having preceded dollies and tracks as a means of allowing a cameraman to achieve a smooth tracking shot. This innovation is usually credited to Leni Riefenstahl in the Nazi propaganda piece *Triumph of the Will* (1935), and – in another clash of virtue and corruption – cited as evidence of a creative spirit that should not be dismissed. Cinematographer James Wong Howe also used rollerskates to add intimacy and fluidity

to the boxing scenes in *Body and Soul* (1947).

The cameraman on wheels is suggestive of another function of roller-skating imagery: the merging of humans with machinery, to sinister or empowering effect. *Rollerball* (1975; remade in 2001) uses a violent roller derby as an allegory for human conflict and its commercialisation, while *Whip It* (2009) sees a young woman utilise her aggression positively when she rejects the

passivity of the beauty pageant circuit in favour of participation in fierce all-female roller derbies.

Roller-skates on film offer a strange range of possibilities, which again might serve to remind us of the functions of cinema itself – beauty through movement, plus catharsis through violence; the innocent delight of childhood, plus the covert promise of sexual transgression; a mechanical means of emotional escape. 



3 Porgy and Bess (1959) Preminger's classic version of Gershwin's opera ended a 30-year cycle of extravagant, all-black-cast Hollywood musicals, and united two important black performers of the era: Sidney Poitier and Dorothy Dandridge. This strikingly abstract East German poster offers a window into how black musicals were interpreted in Europe.



4 Foxy Brown (1974) The Blaxploitation movement gave birth to such indelible characters as Shaft and Superfly, in the process fostering a whole new idea of black masculinity on screen. But it wasn't an all-male party: Pam Grier's independent, confident, resourceful heroine was immortalised in this iconic all-action poster (with bonus rap!).



5 Bamboozled (2000) As black American cinema entered its second century, progress had undeniably been made, with auteur Spike Lee in the vanguard. The confrontational poster for his acidic satire, however, cannily repurposed racist tropes from a bygone era, questioning whether things had improved as much as we'd been led to believe.

TROUBLES AND STRIFE



Yann Demange, director of '71, talks about super 16, balancing Pontecorvo and John Carpenter, and a lost chance for Ricky Gervais

By Adam Nayman

Feature film debuts don't come much more muscular than Yann Demange's '71, a thriller that transforms Belfast at the height of the Troubles into a nightmare landscape. Assigned to riot control in a Catholic neighbourhood patrolled by rival IRA factions and infiltrated by corrupt undercover British officers, naive squaddie Gary (Jack O'Connell) is violently separated from his comrades and left to wander through pitch-dark streets. Demange directs the action in a fluid, relentless style, boxing his protagonist into his dangerous new environment and collapsing the artistic distance between historical drama and nocturnal horror movie. Demange spoke to *Sight & Sound* at the Toronto International Film Festival.

Adam Nayman: '71 gives the impression of being a very carefully worked over movie – even when chaos is erupting on screen, the sound and image are extremely controlled. Do you consider yourself a meticulous filmmaker?

Yann Demange: I can't compare myself to others, but I only know one way to do it, and it's quite obsessive. I didn't speak to any friends or family for four and a half months. My mindset was that I wouldn't ever get to make a second film, because I took so long to commit to the project that would be my first film. So once I got there, it was like nothing else existed. I don't know if it's a sustainable way of working.

AN: It would seem that your two most important technical collaborators on this production were your cinematographer and your editor.

YD: I've been with both of them nine years. Tat Radcliffe, my DP, has shot everything I've ever done for television [including *Dead Set* and *Top Boy*]. There were some big names out there who could have shot this movie, but I knew I couldn't do it without Tat. I first reached out to [editor] Chris Wyatt after I saw *This Is England*: I was blown away by the cutting in that film. He's been my editor ever since, and I hope I don't ever have to do anything without him.

AN: There are a lot of long, complicated takes in '71, but the sense of seamlessness from one scene to the next probably has as much to do with cutting as camera movement...

YD: Tat and I have our own process. We don't watch the rushes. Instead, we go to the cutting room in the next apartment and watch the edits. We watch the cuts at night, go to sleep, and then before we go to the set, we do the same thing. So a lot of decisions are made when we're shooting. Some of my peers don't cut a single frame until they've wrapped the shooting; I like cutting as I shoot. It informs the language of the movie for me. I'm quite an improvisational shooter, even if there was a lot of planning on this film.

AN: One thing that's received a lot of attention is your choice to shoot on two different formats: 16mm for the daytime sequences and then digital at night.

YD: I was thinking about the colours in the



Alternative Ulster: Yann Demange on the set of '71

film: green uniforms, red bricks. We did a lot of different tests in costume and on location. And the highlights on the digital material didn't feel right, and neither did the skin tones. I was watching a lot of archival footage and everything back then was shot in super 16. So it felt like the visual language of the time. For the nighttime stuff, we went digital, for practical reasons but also to distance ourselves from realism: we wanted something more mythical and impressionistic.

AN: There's also something slightly surreal about the locations – long mazes of city streets and back alleys, almost like a rabbit warren.

YD: That came from researching real images and archival material. I came across this amazing brutalist architecture, a block of flats that had been an IRA stronghold. They'd been torn down, so we did a massive search and we found a dead ringer that was unoccupied. It was a period where they were doing something called internment [imprisonment without trial], a really misguided piece of legislation. The Republicans were trying to protect themselves from raids, so they were blocking their streets, piling up cars, ripping up cobblestones. Cars are burning, black smoke coming up... when you look at the photos from the period it looks like something from *The Road*. It was apocalyptic. I wanted to capture that.

AN: The big question is whether that almost otherworldly cinematic quality clashes with the historical and political responsibilities of making a movie about the Troubles.

YD: It's in the film. It's there. I did take it on. But I'm aware of my limitations. I'm not a polemicist. I don't come from an extensively knowledgeable place about the Troubles, so I had to learn my shit. I didn't see it as an issue movie or a message movie, but as something about human beings

I didn't see it as an issue movie or a message movie, but as something about human beings trapped in these situations

trapped in these situations. So I thought of *Army of Shadows* or *The Battle of Algiers*, yes, but also *The Warriors* or the movies of John Carpenter.

AN: I thought of *The Warriors* too, because it's also about being lost in a neighbourhood where everybody is hunting you and trying to kill you. It's a sort of heightened, paranoid perspective.

YD: I did give a lot of thought to the construction of point of view, and I didn't offer a lot of exposition and set it up. I wanted the audience to experience everything with the protagonist. I wanted the violence to slap you and shock you and be experiential.

AN: It does make sense that the protagonist of the film wouldn't be all that well informed.

YD: Ever since World War II, when soldiers get sent on these details, they don't have a clue. These are convoluted, dirty conflicts. Nobody knows what the fuck is going on.

AN: There's a line in the script that sums up that lack of understanding very well.

YD: Yeah: "Posh cunts telling thick cunts to kill poor cunts." It's a fantastic line. That's Gregory Burke, who is a fantastic writer. I changed a lot, but most of the script is still there. He wrote that line and I thought that it was like haiku. He distilled everything about the film right down.

AN: In a way, the film rises or falls on Jack O'Connell's lead performance. He's on screen in almost every scene.

YD: It's the biggest casting decision I've ever made. The film hangs on him and he barely says a word... I was very lucky that my financiers didn't make me put a bigger name in it.

AN: Like Ricky Gervais.

YD: He wouldn't have gotten me enough! I would have loved Ricky to be in it. Or maybe Mackenzie Crook. With Jack, he has an old-school masculinity. He's cut from a different cloth. There's a bit of danger there. He's a bit rough. He wanted to be a football player or join the army. He understood this kid. I knew I wanted him.

i '71 screens at the BFI London Film Festival on 9 and 10 October, is released on 10 October and is reviewed on page 66

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MYTHS AND LEGENDS

Lauren Bacall may not have been everything her obituaries pretended, but she sure was something



By Mark Cousins

I was going to write about Lauren Bacall, and how the obituaries' habit of labelling her a legend, a myth, overestimated and

made a mirage of the real woman, who was very interesting and sometimes mean, but then I read David Thomson's shocking essay about her in the last issue of this magazine ('Slim pickings', *S&S*, October). I know and love David – he's gentle and generous – but am angry with him for delivering a verdict on Bacall that seems as concerned with being distinctive about her as being true. I was going to take Bacall off the pedestal – I was going to say *naw* to the awe – but David has kicked over the statue.

Let's start with his lowest line: it's far too negative to say that the elderly Bacall was a social bore and not much of an actress. In her early movies she was velvet and sharp; in real life, she was sharp and velvet. She walked into a burger restaurant as if she wasn't trailing, in her wake, chiffon images, attitudes, lighting styles and Dietrich dialogues, as if there hadn't been something Von Sternberg-y about her – something to do with the founding of some ideas we have of where the 20th century came from, and how women can be. The chiffon didn't detach, it sat around her like a Méliès dancer. As she talked about Hemingway or Gershwin, as she said 'fuck' and drank beer, it was clear she wasn't thinking of the chiffon. She liked others who didn't either, who could hold their own at table.

David's downgrade rings false in other ways. Yes, *To Have and Have Not* and *The Big Sleep* came out just a few years apart, but to call them, and her work in them, "a moment" is to misunderstand that they are ongoing – that Bacall, suddenly, was what we didn't know we'd long wanted on screen. The tartness of her retort, her extension of Dietrich in those films: these things were a breakthrough and, like most breakthroughs, they opened things out – in this case the portrayal of women, confidence and youth on screen. If Bacall was a moment, so was Falconetti in *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, and so was Louise Brooks.

David's right to identify Bacall's subsequent key films as *Young Man with a Horn*, *Designing Woman*, *Written on the Wind*, and *The Shootist* (these are the films about which I talked with her in *Scene by Scene*, which is on YouTube), but he's wrong to see each as good despite her. Bacall is marble-hard at times as the bisexual character Amy North in *Young Man with a Horn*, co-written by Carl Foreman just before he was blacklisted by the House Un-American Activities Committee. She was night to Doris Day's day. But why was accepting such a role a mistake? Don't we praise Lee Marvin and Richard Widmark for not trying to make us love them, for playing delusion? Can't we credit Bacall with the same courage,



rather than assuming that she wasn't wise in her choice of it? She showed that courage as part of the Committee for the First Amendment, and as the McCarthy paranoia spread.

Douglas Sirk's *Written on the Wind* was widely dismissed in Hollywood, and by highbrow critics, and Bacall herself didn't see how good it was, but she sailed through it because that was the part. She judged it well. If she'd been reckless like Dorothy Malone in it, the film's pressure cooker would have exploded. It needed her semi-detachment. She gave tension to the picture, *sang froid*, a feeling of elsewhere which gave it its respite. David admits that she was fun in *Designing Woman*, but she was more than that. She had abandon in Minnelli's film – the very thing he finds wanting elsewhere.

And then there's Bacall's personal life. Is it necessary to say that Thomson's comment, that Frank Sinatra, Adlai Stevenson and Jason Robards are her credits, is dispiriting? Sinatra treated her appallingly, proposed marriage then fucked off, and Robards's alcoholism made life

Bacall helped make Hollywood what it is. She graciously allowed herself to be part of its canopy, its searchlight, its enticement

very tough indeed. To say that her men were her art makes no sense. Think what Bacall had to deal with: being pilloried in her early 20s, when she was still learning her job, for giving a bad performance in *Confidential Agent*; ageing in a culture that wants women not to; malicious lovers like Sinatra; the powerlessness of being an actor, subject to the industry's whims; and the toxic power of being famous, which entreats you to be your worst. Fawned over, sucked up to, bored by getting whatever she wanted materially, yet denied any consistency of professional esteem, no wonder Bacall was capricious. Once she realised that she had voltage, no wonder she switched it off and on at will. Thomson's attack on Bacall is not unlike her attacks on people if they bored her or did a minor wrong.

Bacall helped make Hollywood what it is. She graciously allowed herself to be part of its canopy, its searchlight, its enticement. More than that, she co-authored that enticement. David credits everyone for what is good in her movies, except her.

Cinema was still a scarily new way of making meaning when she found herself at its centre, yet she improvised with it well. She rode its wave, and when its waves didn't come, she went elsewhere – to politics, travelling, the theatre, writing, socialising.

She had gall, Bacall, and needed it. ☺

DEVELOPMENT TALE

EFFIE GRAY



A separation: Dakota Fanning in the title role of *Effie Gray*, which explores the scandal surrounding her divorce from the Victorian art critic John Ruskin

Emma Thompson's script about the events surrounding a Victorian legal *cause célèbre* was almost derailed by its own court battles

By Charles Gant

Donald Rosenfeld first met Emma Thompson when he was head of Merchant Ivory Productions. She won her first Oscar in James Ivory's *Howards End* (1992) and was nominated a year later for his *The Remains of the Day*, with Rosenfeld serving as associate producer on both pictures. Years later, having struck out on his own as an independent producer in 1998, he tried to mount a film based on a screenplay by Thompson about Chilean theatre director, poet and political activist Víctor Jara, who was murdered by the Chilean army in 1973.

"In the end the widow of Víctor Jara didn't want the movie made," Rosenfeld says. "Her husband was tortured and killed by Pinochet. I don't want to do that to her again with a movie, for God's sake. We spent about a year developing that together, me and Emma."

Meanwhile Thompson was pursuing a film about another historical figure: Effie Gray, the young wife of the Victorian art critic John Ruskin.

A scandal erupted when Effie sought to have the marriage annulled after six years on the grounds of non-consummation, before marrying one of the Pre-Raphaelite painters – John Everett Millais – that Ruskin had championed.

Explains Rosenfeld, "Emma had read *Parallel Lives* by Phyllis Rose, about five Victorian marriages, and she said the weirdest one is Ruskin. She was writing away, and I would ask her what's happening with it. She goes, 'Well, I've got Scott Rudin producing and Mike Nichols directing.' I said, 'Well, when you're done with all that, [come back to me]. *Effie Gray* could have been a Scott Rudin, Mike Nichols, Paramount Pictures whatever, it would have been wonderful, but it's a different kettle of fish."

Actresses including Carey Mulligan and Saoirse Ronan were linked at various times to the part of Effie, and *Screen International* reported in November 2009 that Ealing was indeed selling a package with Mulligan in the title role, opposite Thompson's husband Greg Wise as Ruskin, with Wise, Potboiler's Gail Egan and Andrea Calderwood all producing.

When Thompson agreed to make *Effie Gray* with Rosenfeld, the film came with two attachments that were not negotiable. As the producer recounts, "She said, 'My husband is

Ruskin.' I said that would be great. 'Oh, you're the first person who's said that.' They all wanted to put these superstars in the role. I said, 'I think he not only looks like him, but this is his moment. He's a great actor who's under-appreciated, and this will be it.'" The second attachment was Richard Laxton (*Life and Lyrics*) to direct – a close friend of the couple who had directed Wise at the start of both their careers in the short film *I Bet It Will Rain* (1992).

Next came the big decision about who to cast as Effie, and Rosenfeld informed casting director Celestia Fox he'd like to discover somebody. Her reaction, according to Rosenfeld: "You're crazy. You're starring Greg, and you want to discover somebody? You're just ridiculous." The producer continues: "She gave me various names: Carey Mulligan, Anne Hathaway, and then she said Dakota Fanning. I said, 'Wait a second. I saw *Man on Fire* a year ago and she's five.' 'No, that was ten years ago and she's 17.' We met, and I loved her." But not everyone was convinced. "Everyone's thinking: she's American. I get a call from other English above-the-line people working on the movie saying, 'Have you lost your mind?' I said, 'Celestia and I stand by her, she will get the accent.'"

With shooting in Scotland, London and Venice beginning in October 2011, one major

hurdle remained the existence of two writers who were claiming breach of copyright. Eve Pomerance, author of two scripts on the same subject, claimed infringement of her work, while Gregory Murphy insisted the film was based on his own play *The Countess*, first performed off-Broadway in 1999 and later presented at London's Criterion Theatre in 2005.

Rosenfeld had been there before: "Any film that I've done that's not based on a novel that we own the rights to, or some underlying work, history films, it brings out [lawsuits]. The bottom line is, if you're sued in America, or you have people running around in the press and saying terrible things, making your movie impossible to make, you have to take action. I asked for a declaratory judgement against this guy who'd written *The Countess*, and we got it. The judge wrote a 62-page opinion saying he can't own history.

"This is Emma Thompson. Why would she need these other two scripts? None of it made any sense from the beginning. Emma very nicely at one point met with Murphy at her house, just to be friendly, and thought maybe he'll relax and we can move on quicker. I told her, 'You can't really do that', but she did it. And then he writes this screed against her in the *Daily Mail*."

Although the court ruled in Thompson's favour through every appeal, the process took several years, with the final judgement only arriving as recently as July this year, says Rosenfeld. Back in August 2011, when the cast was announced, Rosenfeld had said that they hoped to premiere at the 2012 Venice Film Festival. It didn't happen.

At one point Claudia Cardinale and Emma Thompson were sweeping the Ducal Palace to get debris out of the way for the shot

Then in 2013, the film was rumoured to be headed for Cannes. The legal uncertainty kept the film away from planned outings that year at the Mill Valley and Hamptons film festivals.

"The whole experience for me was not as exhausting as it seems," Rosenfeld says. "It cost a lot of money, and it is what it is, but I have to keep doing it. Unless there's some barrier to entry, somebody's always going to come and say it's theirs. It's just the way it is."

The producer puts the cost of the legal challenges at \$1 million, a nasty sting in the tail after the film had been so careful with production coin. "What I do, I put all the money on the screen," says Rosenfeld – a cliché, to be sure, but one that may be earned in this instance. "You have to make do. [Producer] Andreas [Roald] was the assistant director in Scotland, and I was the production manager in Venice. We were doing everything from locations to hotels. Richard Laxton had a Jim Ivory shooting ratio. We had 30,000 feet of film, which is nothing. At one point Claudia Cardinale, Emma Thompson and Ruth Myers, the costume designer, were sweeping the Ducal Palace to get debris out of the way to make the shot. All in all, it was quite an experience." 

 **Effie Gray is released on 10 October and is reviewed on page 72**

THE NUMBERS TWO DAYS, ONE NIGHT



Same-day service: *Two Days, One Night*

By Charles Gant

When Artificial Eye, the UK's premier arthouse film distributor, relaunched its Curzon video-on-demand service in April 2012, it brought attention to the platform via Aki Kaurismäki's *Le Havre*, a brand new cinema release that could be viewed simultaneously in the comfort of your own home. At the time, it was far and away the highest-profile film to have been released in this way, and it went on to gross £354,000 at UK cinemas.

In 2013, releasing foreign-language films simultaneously via Curzon Home Cinema became more or less the default option for the distributor, but notably its two biggest subtitled hits that year, *The Great Beauty* and *Blue Is the Warmest Colour*, retained the traditional theatrical window.

It's a sign of how quickly the exhibition landscape is shifting that so far in 2014 all of Curzon Artificial Eye's foreign-language films have been released day-and-date (in the industry parlance) on VOD, including the current arthouse smash from the Dardenne brothers. And if the distributor wants to articulate the view that home cinema doesn't dent theatrical revenues, it could hardly point to a more compelling example than *Two Days, One Night*, which at press time was closing in on £700,000 at UK cinemas, a huge step up from the Dardenne's previous best (*The Kid with a Bike*, £368,000).

When they break the 16-week theatrical window with a home-entertainment release, distributors sacrifice the prospect of the film playing in the main multiplex chains (Odeon, Vue, Cineworld). So in the case of *Two Days, One Night*, which grossed a highly encouraging £165,000 from 54 cinemas on its opening weekend, there was nowhere – ie the more-upscale multiplex venues – for it to expand into. The upside is for the independent exhibitors playing the title, as Curzon Artificial Eye's Jon Rushton explains: "It does give them more ownership. You're not competing with the crossover multiplex sites near you, so therefore you are getting a clearer run of the film."

It's very convenient for a distributor such as Curzon Artificial Eye that the cinemas where you'd want to play a typical release – regional film theatres, Picturehouse and its own Curzon chain – are exactly the ones that are relaxed about day-and-date VOD. The challenge remains for distributors to find an equivalent strategy for the smaller mainstream film that won't easily book into those venues and naturally occupies a multiplex space. Rushton agrees: "It is tricky if you've got a film that's a strong home-entertainment proposition because of the cast and the genre, but for whatever reason you don't feel like it's a 300-print release. If you want to go day-and-date, where's the home for that film?"

In the past year or so, Lionsgate managed to find 20 cinemas willing to play mainstream comedies *Bachelorette* and *They Came Together*, despite offering them simultaneously on home-entertainment platforms, and Icon has just done the same with the Elijah Wood thriller *Grand Piano*. Until the big chains come up with an agreed policy to compromise on the traditional window – for titles going out on, say, fewer than 50 screens – it's going to remain hard for smaller, mainstream films to find their natural place in the market. 

TOP UK BOX OFFICE FOR FILMS RELEASED SIMULTANEOUSLY ON DEMAND

Film	Gross
Two Days, One Night	£685,601*
A Late Quartet	£528,987
The Lunchbox	£489,285
What Maisie Knew	£361,508
Le Havre	£354,460
Nymph()maniac: Vol. I + II	£308,603
Lore	£300,285

*gross to September 21

PLASTICINE DREAMS

BFI FILM FUND INSIGHTS

The BFI/Aardman Animation Development Lab is an experiment that aims to tap into the UK's strong tradition in the genre



By Ben Roberts

This month we're launching an Animation Development Lab with Aardman, the makers of the Wallace and Gromit films,

which has been so complex to discuss and so meticulous in design that it might have moved faster if it had been animated in Plasticine.

We first talked about a partnership with Aardman in late 2012, just as we were getting our heads around the most effective way to invest development funds into a sector that is under-supported but notoriously expensive and time-consuming. We were also about to make Vision Awards to four animation companies – Blue-Zoo, Nexus, Flickerpix and Lupus – to help them develop feature ideas while they continued their TV and/or commercials work. Since none of these companies had made a full-length animated feature, we knew this investment carried a risk and wasn't enough of a push on its own to make a difference to the sector.

You can crudely divide UK animated film into those filmmakers working in a more playful and experimental space and those interested in the kind of commercially driven features that are almost impossible to get made. While considering a shorts scheme to support the former, we decided to see if we could generate some activity in the latter, using the Aardman brain to focus on building stories, characters and designs that could appeal to a broader crowd.

Unlike 'live action', design can be as important as screenwriting as a starting-point for development. Far more time is spent developing a detailed and workable treatment before moving to script and storyboards. Since these visual elements are outside our experience, we felt we needed help. The Animation Development Lab will take on three projects over two years (selected from open applications through our website), and a dedicated development brain assigned by Aardman will work with the filmmakers to help shape their ideas – the aim is that they will emerge with a set of compelling 'greenlight-ready' material. (Beyond that, the goal is that Aardman or someone else will advance one or more projects to the next level.) It is a lab, and this is an experiment; but focusing intensively on a small number of projects feels like the best approach, particularly given the associated costs.

The UK has a strong tradition of animation that can be peculiarly British in form and theme, but

We have been looking for the most effective way to invest in a sector that is under-supported but notoriously expensive



Raymond Briggs's *Ethel & Ernest*

which appeals to huge audiences when it hits the mark. Aardman has produced some of the most strikingly British animation of the past 20 years, but long before the company came into being, films such as *Watership Down*, *Animal Farm* and even *Yellow Submarine* were shuddering into life in a manner that felt comfortably homemade. You only need to look at last year's John Lewis instant classic Christmas telly moment – *The Bear & the Hare* – for evidence that the shimmer of 'hand-drawn' animation still has a comforting allure.

One of our Vision awardees, Lupus is now adapting Raymond Briggs's *Ethel & Ernest* for cinema, and we are likely to support the company. The story is so British that it could make you a cup of tea, but it's a beautiful portrayal of the ages of a relationship, which would be almost impossible to evoke with actors (unless Richard Linklater has another 50-odd years to spare). *Ethel & Ernest* is actually relatively inexpensive – lots of pencils and lots of time – but the stop-motion and CG work of Aardman and the like is so costly that without studio support it will always be difficult to have any impact in the UK.

Some recent attempts, such as the UK Film Council-supported *Valiant*, have been noble failures – perhaps because they were trying to build an audience without any existing branding to compete with the likes of Pixar and DreamWorks. The expense needed to produce a feature has pushed a lot of work to cheaper parts of the world (and a lack of projects pushes the best animators to studios in the US). But recently there have been signs of life.

Sarah Smith, who directed 2009's *Arthur Christmas*, has financial backing from Elisabeth Murdoch for her new company Locksmith to develop mid- to high-budget features in the UK. David Furnish's Rocket Pictures and Andy Serkis's The Imaginarium has some big projects in development. Aardman itself is about to deliver a Shaun the Sheep movie, its first feature since leaving its deals with DreamWorks and Sony and returning to the scary world of independent finance – this has the benefit of a highly recognisable character to grab an audience.

And this year, for the first time, our UK statistical yearbook put animation as the year's top-performing genre at the UK box office. With an increasing convergence of animation, games, film and TV – in terms of skills and audiences – it's time we took it seriously again. @bfbiben

IN PRODUCTION

● **Lars von Trier** is currently working on a new English-language television series entitled *The House That Jack Built*. The series, announced at the Venice Film Festival, is von Trier's first venture into television since 1994's *The Kingdom*, and boasts "a major international cast".

● **Lucile Hadzihalilovic**, whose 2004 debut feature *Innocence* was among the most striking of the noughties, has been at work on her long-awaited follow-up. Titled *Evolution*, and written by Hadzihalilovic and Alanté Kavaïté, the film is reportedly a fantasy that revolves around an 11-year-old girl who lives on a seaside estate with a hospital at which all the boys in the village have to undergo strange medical trials. Hadzihalilovic has cited *The Island of Doctor Moreau* as an influence. Count us in.

● **Park Chan-wook** is to return to Korean-language cinema for his next project, following the English-language *Stoker* in 2013, but has turned to an English source: Sarah Waters's London-set novel *Fingersmith*, about a group of female thieves and their plan to scam an heiress. Park's film will move the action from 19th-century London to Korea. Park's new short film, *A Rose Reborn*, screens at this month's Busan International Film Festival in Korea.

● **Eric Khoo**, the Singaporean director of *Mee Pok Man* (1995) and *Be with Me* (2005), has started shooting his next film, *In the Room*. Described as an erotic anthology, the film consists of six stories, each directed by Khoo, set in the same hotel room over several decades, from the Pacific War to the future. The multi-ethnic cast includes Chinese, Thai, Japanese, Korean and British actors.

● **Catherine Hardwicke**, director of small-scale dramas like *Thirteen* (2003) as well as genre efforts like *Twilight* (2008), is at work on *Miss You Already*, a story of two friends who experience problems when one of them struggles to have a baby and the other is diagnosed with breast cancer. The film is based on a script by Morwenna Banks, and is shooting in Yorkshire. Drew Barrymore, Toni Collette, Dominic Cooper, Jacqueline Bisset and Paddy Considine star.

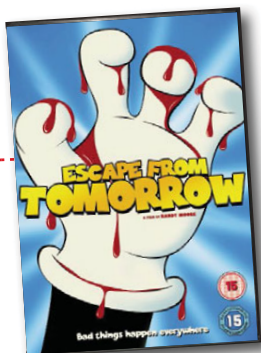
● **Ang Lee** (below) is to make his first film since the hugely successful *Life of Pi* (2012) – an adaptation of Ben Fountain's novel *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk*, a story about a 19-year-old soldier whose squad survive a battle in the Iraq war that was captured on embedded news cameras, making them instant heroes. Production will begin early next year.



fresh produce



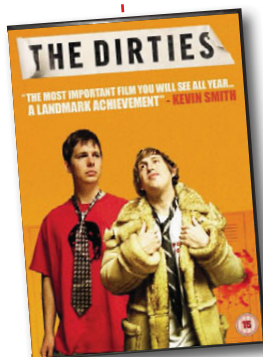
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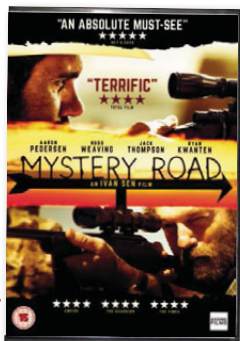
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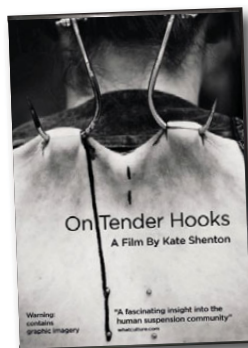
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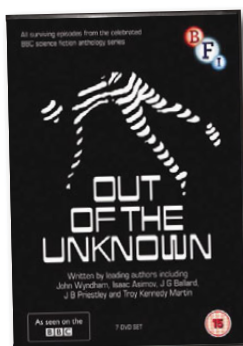
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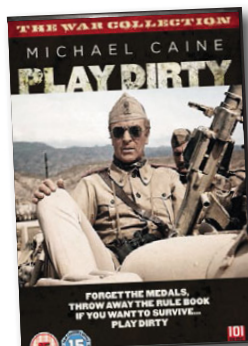
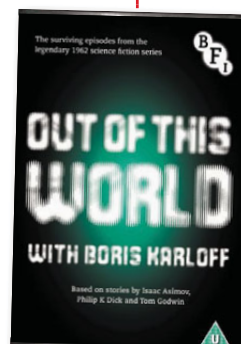


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FROM RAGS TO PICTURES

agnès b. has made a seamless transition from fashion designer who filmmakers love, to film producer and now director

By Nick Bradshaw

"*J'aime le cinéma*" runs her T-shirt slogan-turned-creed, and over the years, as she has spun the wages of dress-down chic into a venerable catalogue of free-thinking movie ventures, cinema has had good reason to *aimer* agnès b. The anti-fashion designer, who has long decorated her showrooms with giant film-poster prints – from the *nouvelle vague* to Wong Kar Wai – credits her love of American *film noir* with inspiring her to open her first New York store in then-disreputable SoHo in the mid 1970s; she has since repaid the debt in spades, starting with her look-defining suits for Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs* (1991) and *Pulp Fiction* (1994). (She also outfitted David Lynch's *Inland Empire* in 2006, and sends Lynch himself supplies of her classic white Andrea shirt, half a dozen at a time; long-time Cannes Film Festival impresario Gilles Jacob used to pack three of her bespoke suits for his fortnights on the Croisette.)

At the turn of the century cineastes began to see her film credits moving beyond the wardrobe department into finance and production: she more or less formally produced or sponsored Gaspar Noé's *I Stand Alone* (*Seul contre tous*, 1998) and *Irreversible* (2002), Claire Denis's *Trouble Every Day* (2001), Vincent Gallo's *The Brown Bunny* (2003), Patrice Chéreau's *Son frère* (2003) and *Gabrielle* (2005), Lucile Hadzihalilovic's *Innocence* (2004), Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno's *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* (2006), Jonas Mekas's *Letter from Greenpoint* (2006) and more. She has often worked through her company Love Streams – set up in 1997 and named after the John Cassavetes movie – whose mission statement is "to develop, produce and coproduce feature films and full-length documentaries directed by challenging and promising filmmakers". In 2004 she also founded another production company, O'Salvation, with Harmony Korine, to produce his *Mister Lonely* (2006) and *Trash Humpers* (2009). Back in 2010 *S&S* asked if Noé and Korine, as *outré* movie brats, might meet to record a conversation for our website, not realising that the two were already acquainted; it occurs that their mutual producer may have made the introductions. "Yeah, they're friends," she says. "[They met] maybe through me. We are friends. This was a present from Harmony two years ago," she says picking up her handbag, daubed with a cartoon figure that's half Snowman, half Wicker Man. "He's a great painter, a great poet. We show his work in my gallery in Paris. *Trash Humpers* was so funny. It didn't come out [in France], but I want to have it on screens in Paris, at midnight, something like that. Because it's a piece of art, really. It's a metaphor for what's going on badly in the States and other countries."

I once heard a film producer divide his profession into two camps: those who make films to buy their houses, and those who sell their houses to make films. As one of France's richest self-made women, b. is likely earning from her



b. movies: agnès b. has sponsored films by Claire Denis and Patrice Chéreau, among others

global chain of more than 200 clothes shops faster than she can lose it on the movies. Lately Love Streams has begun releasing DVDs, from Eric Rohmer to Matthew Barney; b. is also a founding sponsor of the Sarajevo Film Festival – and in February was awarded France's Henri Langlois Prize, "for actors, directors and technicians who had an influence on the movie industry".

She has also now written and directed her own debut feature, *My Name is Hmmm...* (signed with her maiden name, Agnès Troublé), a road movie about a pre-teen girl on the lam from domestic abuse with a truck driver played by the artist Douglas Gordon. A bravura melange of encounters and stylistic devices, it's stirred by memories of her own girlhood, and won a special mention from the Child Protection Award jury at last year's Abu Dhabi Film Festival "for breaking the wall of silence on a sensitive taboo subject in an authentic cinematic vision".

I interviewed her when she came to London to promote the film; the idea was to probe her experiences as a patron of cinema for this Industry section – an idea that seems ironic, because agnès b. clearly lives and breathes art. "I wanted to be a museum curator, I wanted to be close to art," she says. "And I wanted to express myself in a different way than making clothes. I drew when I was young, too, at the Ecole de Beaux-Arts in Versailles. I took photographs; I did collage for a while, and the film is a sort of collage, because I mixed the cameras, I was very free to do what I wanted."

I ask if she's the sort of producer who can

I wanted to be a museum curator, I wanted to be close to art. And I wanted to express myself in a different way than making clothes

collage different pools of money, and get a reply that could be the obverse of her T-shirt slogan: "We try, but... *j'ai jamais gagné d'argent avec le cinéma*. Because they are quite difficult films, so it's more to share the problems. For a film to exist, you have to find money, but you don't always get the money back. It's important for me that these films exist – Gaspar, Claire Denis, Patrice Chéreau – that's why I was involved."

What determines which filmmakers she sticks with? "Claire Denis I helped to finish a film. That's why I started a company, because I thought I can't be rescuing, it's better if I go into the films first... But now I prefer to do it differently, because the company is quite heavy. Having a company alone with three people is quite expensive, so now they do something else, and I am going to keep Love Streams as a name, and put the money directly on films, one by one, not having a company. It's better."

I delve for anything further resembling strategy or acumen, but it really does seem to boil down to mutual admiration and back-scratching. Mekas shot part of her film; Air's Jean-Benoît Dunckel provided music. Noé and Gallo both sent compliments, and she's expecting Placebo frontman Brian Molko at her UK premiere. "All my friends are artists or musicians," she says. "I meet the people I admire. The way it happens, it happens."

Are the filmmakers she produces always friends? "Not always." How does she look for talent? "Ah, they come to me... through friends, or because the subject interests me. We have a project now with Daft Punk. They want to do a fiction [about how they began]. I've known them since the beginning. We have good musicians in France. At last!"

i *My Name is Hmmm...* is released on 17 October and is reviewed on page 84

VENICE

THAT SINKING FEELING

A handful of captivating titles failed to banish the sense that the festival is losing its way in an increasingly competitive circuit

By Nick James

With a strong Locarno beforehand, Rome hovering afterwards, and an increasingly hostile wrangle for US titles between Telluride, Toronto and itself, Venice was caught in a difficult position this year. Festival director Alberto Barbera took a defensive position early, saying that the US studios were “increasingly focused on the domestic market” arguing for Venice to be more of a place of “research and discovery” and not so much of a “walkway for celebrities”. The real consequence, however, was a programme thin on glamour and quality. On paper it looked strong in auteur names and curiosities; the reality was less engaging – with the exception of a handful of titles.

In terms of intelligence, craft and emotional power, **The Look of Silence** – Joshua Oppenheimer’s follow-up to his investigation of the legacy of Indonesian genocide *The Act of Killing* – was from a different universe. Focusing on Adi, a young ophthalmologist whose brother Ramli was among thousands slaughtered at Snake River before he was born, the film seems constructed partly to answer the criticisms raised by the first film’s encouragement of mass murderers to re-enact their crimes. *The Act of Killing* was also accused of not giving enough historical background, and for giving an outsider’s viewpoint; *The Look of Silence* internalises these critiques. Adi is first seen watching footage showing the confessions of the goons responsible for his brother’s death. He’s then taken to meet them – partly under the pretext of giving them an eye test. His brother’s murder is described in graphic detail – the killers talk of drinking victims’ blood to ward off madness – and we get much more contextual detail of what happened. Adi had been conceived in an attempt to help fill the void left by his dead brother, but his now ancient parents are still haunted by what happened. More conventional than its predecessor, *The Look of Silence* completes an astonishing diptych and more than deserved its Grand Jury Prize.

The main prize, the Golden Lion, was won by Roy Andersson’s magnificent **A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence**. There’s a snobbery in some critical quarters towards this perfectionist, who relies so much on novelty,

Like the first two films in his loose trilogy, *Songs from the Second Floor* (2000) and *You, the Living* (2007), *A Pigeon...* is made up of painstakingly choreographed interlinked sketches of pasty-faced lugubrious types dealing with farcical and surreal situations with a certain deadpan aplomb. Andersson sends himself up most of all. The episodes mostly concern anxious slow-witted pals Sam and Jonathan, who sell novelty items such as vampire teeth and rubber masks. Try not to read too much about Limping Lotta’s Gothenburg bar or the visit of King Charles XII to a present-day greasy spoon, or you’ll ruin all the surprises.

Another film it would be best not to know too much about in advance is Veronika Franz and Severin Fiala’s **Goodnight Mommy**, a horror yarn of extraordinary precision and menace (Franz is the wife of director Ulrich Seidl, who serves as producer here). Twin brothers become convinced that their putative mother, who’s recently returned from having facial

surgery and whose visage is under wraps, is not really their mother but a lookalike or secret twin – so they turn against her.

I felt a post-Oppenheimer shiver in a screening of Anthony Mann’s nicely restored 1955 western **The Man from Laramie** when somebody asks James Stewart’s character if he had been at the battle at Snake River. Mann’s lovely film also made a useful measure for David Oelhoffen’s solid virtual western **Far from Men**, set in Algeria in 1954 and adapted from Albert Camus’s short story ‘L’Hôte’ (which translates as both ‘the host’ and ‘the guest’). Viggo Mortensen plays Daru, a teacher in the Atlas Mountains, who’s asked to escort an Arab prisoner (Reda Kateb – a dead ringer for the young Anthony Quinn) – to his almost certain execution. A relationship of respect builds amid several tough moral dilemmas. Much aesthetic attention is paid to the harsh landscape (the film was shot in Morocco), performances are strong and there’s a very effective score by Nick Cave and Warren Ellis, and if the film could do with being sprinkled with a little more of the character, sweep and humour of the Mann film, it does nonetheless compel.

Newcomer Naji Abu Nowar’s **Theeb** was likewise tagged as an ‘Arab western’, though I saw it more as an antidote to the imperial swagger of *Lawrence of Arabia*. Set in the same time and place as Lean’s epic, *Theeb* follows the fortunes of the titular Bedouin boy, who, when his brother is asked to guide an Englishman on a dangerous journey across the desert to a well, secretly tags along. It’s a taut, convincing survival yarn, directed with a sure hand.

Two films with wonderful openings that then fall away somewhat were Benoît Jacquot’s high-toned love triangle **Three Hearts** and Saverio Costanzo’s **Hungry Hearts**, a disturbing drama with hints of *Rosemary’s Baby* about a couple warring over the care of their newborn child. Meet-cute clichés are teased with subtle atmospheric touches in *Three Hearts* as hyperventilating tax officer Marc (Benoît Poelvoorde) misses the last train back to Paris from the quiet city of Valence, and meets the enigmatic Sophie (Charlotte Gainsbourg) in a bar. He asks for help finding a hotel, but instead they end up walking around all night talking. Thereafter, sadly, the subtleties evaporate. Marc faints from heart trouble on the way to their subsequent date in Paris. He goes in search of Sophie, but she’s left for the US with her husband, whom she no longer loves. Then Marc meets Sylvie (Chiara Mastroianni), who happens to be Sophie’s beloved sister,

VENICE TOP TEN

1. **A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence** Roy Andersson
2. **The Look of Silence** Joshua Oppenheimer
3. **Pasolini** Abel Ferrara
4. **Red Amnesia** (below) Wang Xiaoshuai
5. **Far from Men** David Oelhoffen
6. **Theeb** Naji Abu Nowar
7. **Goodnight Mommy** Veronika Franz, Severin Fiala
8. **The Postman’s White Knights** Andrei Konchalovsky
9. **Hungry Hearts** Saverio Costanzo
10. **The Hill of Freedom** Hong Sang-soo





The key of life: David Gordon Green's *Manglehorn* sees Al Pacino play an ageing locksmith who is still mourning the love of his life who left him 40 years ago

and they marry. Fate then takes us where we've been too many times before.

Hungry Hearts arrests attention in a more confined space. Italian Embassy worker Mina (Alba Rohrwacher) enters the small toilet of a restaurant, realises there's a guy having a crisis in the stall and tries to leave, but the door jams. Jude (Adam Driver) is horribly embarrassed, yet before you know it, they're in a relationship. Mina gets accidentally pregnant and they marry. These early set-up scenes are superb – the acting is completely beguiling – but when the battle over the weight of their baby son begins, the characters become less and less plausible.

Both Barry Levinson's *The Humbling* and David Gordon Green's *Manglehorn* are indulgent of Al Pacino's grandiloquent tendencies, though the Levinson film has a good half-hour of very funny multiple-irony farce. Adapted from Philip Roth's novel, it sees Pacino as a retired actor prone to fantasy who gets involved in a series of inappropriate relationships – the main one involving Greta Gerwig as the lesbian daughter of a former co-star. *Manglehorn*, about an ageing locksmith, is marred by sentimental gestures more suited to supermarket ads. Harmony Korine plays a pimp who Manglehorn (Pacino) once coached in little-league baseball. American theatrical symbolism reaches a new low when, after being beaten up by Manglehorn, Korine's character mumbles to the sky, "Why do you hate the world so much, coach? Why do you hate the world?"

Probably the most depressing films at Venice were those ploughing such ancient furrows as skateboarding, junk and male teenage prostitution. Larry Clark's *The Smell of Us* takes voyeurism and 1990s shock values precisely nowhere, or rather to Paris, where the scions of a very expensive *lycée* peddle their bodies to get luxury items. In the Safdie brothers' *Heaven Knows What*, we're supposed to empathise with the usual tragic narcissists because they're still pretty underneath the artfully caked dirt. There's nothing about this film that cinema hasn't already flushed through its veins over and over again.

On a brighter note, Andrei Konchalovsky won the Silver Lion for Best Director with his semi-improvised lakeside drama *The Postman's White Knights*. Shot in a low-fi digital format, the film follows a sad clown character, played winningly by real postman Aleksey Tryapitsyn, as he scuds across the lake in his speedboat, and links together minor made-up dramas, all portrayed by real locals. The film has much sympathetic crowd-pleasing charm, although it errs on the side of cutesy every chance it gets.

Abel Ferrara's *Pasolini* imagines the last day in the life of Italy's most passionate director, evoking too the unrealised projects that may have been running through his mind as the hour of his notorious murder approached. The largely Italian audience I watched it with gave the film a muted reception. Those I spoke to afterwards put that down to the film's one-day focus, its jumps between English and Italian dialogue and its portrayal of a murder motivated by homophobia rather than the political killing many believe happened. As



In the eye of the storm: Joshua Oppenheimer's *The Look of Silence*

a detester of the average biopic, however, I enjoyed *Pasolini*'s inventive interleaving of the many threads of its subject's identity into one succinct 87-minute experience: Willem Dafoe incarnates the director's hard-edged look, his voice has the right authority, and the 70s-style dark-lit corridor cinematography gives it the right kind of elegance and polish.

Venice has always made a point of its Asian selections and this year had a couple worth mentioning. Wang Xiaoshuai's *Red Amnesia* is a subtly complex intrigue focusing on Beijing grandmother Deng Meijuan (played by stage veteran Lü Zhong), who is just reaching an age where her two sons – one a well-off family man, the other a gay hairdresser – are considering her future. She lives alone, yet constantly tries to interfere in her offspring's lives. Her apartment building suffers from regular break-ins, and a young man in a red baseball cap may be stalking her. These elements are handled deftly, stimulating genuine suspense and intellectual curiosity as the hidden historical

'The Look of Silence' more than deserved its Grand Jury Prize, for its intelligence, craft and emotional power



A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence

nature of the threat to Deng comes slowly to the surface. The only aspect that mars the film is some very ordinary digital cinematography.

Hong Sang-soo makes too many films too fast. I assumed – correctly – that *Hill of Freedom* would be another light fable of earnest, embarrassed meetings in bars and restaurants, but it does add a little variety in that the protagonists here are all speaking English as a foreign language and the sequence of events is jumbled up as a result of a conceptual conceit. The film takes the form of an epistolary drama in which a woman, Kwon (Seo Young-hwa), returns to Seoul from holiday to find a series of letters from an eager paramour, Mori (Ryo Kase). She takes the letters to read in a coffee shop called 'The Hill of Freedom', but drops them en route. When she gathers them up, she inadvertently rearranges the order of the pages and the structure of the film then follows the random chronology in which she reads them. Much mild hilarity ensues and even though it feels as if it might collapse at any moment, you forgive it its amiably lazy feel. And that's similar to how Venice felt this year. You want to forgive its occasional flimsiness, but how long it can retain its status under current conditions is in doubt. 📡

i Far from *Men, Theeb, Hungry Hearts, Pasolini* and *Hill of Freedom* will screen at the London Film Festival (8-19 October)



Naji Abu Nowar's *Theeb*

TORONTO

STEEL BEHIND THE SHEEN



Addicted to love: Peter Strickland's *The Duke of Burgundy* is an erotic fever dream with echoes of Jess Franco and David Lynch

With Toronto beginning to flex its muscles over its programming policies, it's hard not to see it pulling away from its competitors

By Ashley Clark

The increasingly influential Toronto International Film Festival, now in its 39th edition and boasting a characteristically huge programme (more than 300 films from 60-plus countries stretched across 16 strands), seemed to be on a charm offensive this year, best exemplified by the enormous billboard emblazoned with the faces of all 21 programmers, encouraging passers-by to locate and chat with them. Yet there's steel behind the sheen: this year, a new programming policy was introduced, with artistic director Cameron Bailey explaining that films premiering at the Telluride festival (in Colorado) would be saddled with a lower-profile slot at TIFF. Such an imperative ultimately gives filmmakers and distributors a straight

choice, and given its record as a launchpad for success (the last seven Best Picture Oscar winners all screened at the festival), it's difficult to believe TIFF won't continue to pull further away from its competitors.

As it happened, five of the best films I saw in the first couple of days had screened at Cannes in May; three of them – *Timbuktu*, Abderrahmane Sissako's measured tale of creeping Islamic extremism in Mali; *Whiplash*, Damien Chazelle's savage jazz-drumming showdown; and *Force Majeure*, Ruben Ostlund's sly battle-of-the-sexes comedy – have already been covered in these pages ('Let there be light', *S&S*, July). The other two deserve attention. Australian director Rolf de Heer's **Charlie's Country** stars the veteran Aboriginal actor David Gulpilil as the eponymous 'blackfella', increasingly driven to distraction by the daily micro-aggressions visited upon him by intrusive whitefolk (including the overly jocular police), who show little respect for his culture or community. Charlie disappears into the wild, at which point a witty character study morphs into a lyrical existential poem,

extensively shot by cinematographer Ian Jones.

In a contrasting register – yet no less affecting – was **The Tribe**, the debut from Ukrainian director Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy. Set inside a school for the deaf where a vicious gang run the halls, the film – which has no dialogue or subtitles, only sign-language – oscillates between tenderness and unbridled savagery with startling unpredictability. With its hypnotic rhythms, poverty-blasted landscapes, extensive use of prowling Steadicam, and non-judgemental attitude toward its decidedly unglamorous characters, it struck me as a feral, Eastern-European *mélange* of Alan Clarke's *Elephant* (1989) and Peter Mullan's *NEDS* (2010).

TIFF boasted new work from high-profile auteurs such as Jean-Luc Godard (*Goodbye to Language*), Roy Andersson (*A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence*), Noah Baumbach (*While We're Young*) and Nuri Bilge Ceylan (*Winter Sleep*), but I found myself drawn to films less likely to receive wider distribution and critical attention. A case in point was **Murder in Pacot**, by Haitian filmmaker Raoul Peck. A modern-day update of Pier Paolo





The Tribe



The Face of an Angel

 Pasolini's *Theorem* transplanted to post-earthquake Port-au-Prince, it focuses on the increasingly fraught interplay between four closely linked individuals. Confined to a single location, it's claustrophobic, unbearably tense and scalpel-sharp on the country's entrenched class divisions.

Szabolcs Hajdu's *Mirage*, meanwhile, was a brilliantly inventive neo-western starring the taciturn Isaach de Bankolé as a disgraced footballer who somehow ends up sold into slavery on a Hungarian farm. It might sound heavy going on paper, but its tone – pitched somewhere between Sergio Leone, Jim Jarmusch, and Vic and Bob slapstick – was surprising and beguiling. One carefully seeded gag, about the misplacement of a football, had me laughing for hours.

TIFF proved to be fecund ground for discovering new voices. *Second Coming*, the screenwriting and directing debut of black British playwright Debbie Tucker Green, is a rare example of a UK film operating in a poetic register despite an ostensible 'kitchen sink' setting. The narrative hinges on an oblique mystery – a woman has miraculously fallen pregnant – that's never fully explained. Green displays a keen, intimate feel for the rhythms and dialect of British West Indian life, and she handles elements of magical realism with a steady hand. If the dramatic tension slackens in the second half, the richly textured, dread-filled atmosphere never dissipates, and the nuanced lead performances, by Nadine Marshall and Idris Elba, command attention. I enjoyed Abd Al Malik's *May Allah Bless France*, which managed to transcend its obvious debts to *La Haine* (monochrome visuals; three-pronged, multiracial cast) to become an invigorating account of a rapper achieving fame on Strasbourg's hard-scrabble streets. A further highlight was Dieudo Hamadi's gripping, *vérité*-style documentary *National Diploma*, about a group of cash-strapped Congolese students who form a breakaway study group in response to being kicked out of their school ahead of a crucial exam. Equally stirring was the Kenyan portmanteau *Stories of Our Lives*, a collective of five crisply shot LGBT-themed shorts from the Nest Collective, who decided to waive

The Ukraine-set 'The Tribe' oscillates between tenderness and unbridled savagery with startling unpredictability

their protective anonymity for the screening.

As is often the case with sustained festival viewing, themes began to develop in spite of the disparate nature of the programme: at TIFF, I noticed a host of films grappling with our wildly diversifying contemporary media landscape. The less said about Jason Reitman's laughable internet-terror soap opera *Men, Women & Children* the better, but Dan

Gilroy's manic satire *Nightcrawler* – one of TIFF's buzzier titles (see review, page 64) – was intriguing. It stars Jake Gyllenhaal as a bug-eyed freelance crime reporter with no moral compass, and though it runs out of steam long before its conclusion, it's pleasingly strident in its criticism of our soulless, parasitic 24-hour news culture. Michael Winterbottom's *The Face of an Angel*, meanwhile, casts the ferrety Daniel Brühl as a frustrated director struggling to make a film of a fictionalised version of the Meredith Kercher murder case of 2007. With its ultimate focus on the creative stagnation and throbbing libido of a middle-aged arty type, however, it wound up oddly reminiscent of Winterbottom's comedy TV series *The Trip*. I was disappointed by Chris Rock's *Top Five*, a curiously sour, dated riff on the reality TV-blighted life of a cosseted modern-day celebrity; I had far more (guilty) fun with Gina Prince Bythewood's hokey melodrama *Beyond the Lights*, a neo-*Bodyguard* yarn about a Brixton girl in Los Angeles (Gugu Mbatha-Raw) struggling with her Rihanna-esque superstar fame.

Out on its own was Peter Strickland's ultra-stylised *The Duke of Burgundy*, which features an all-female cast and focuses on a sadomasochistic relationship between a lepidopterist and her ostensibly mousy assistant. With an aesthetic sensibility that lies somewhere between Jess Franco, *Blue Velvet* and the video for Robert Palmer's 'Addicted to Love', this lurid, richly textured work also resounds as an unexpectedly touching treatise on how the ageing process, combined with unequal expectations, can sabotage even the most unorthodox partnerships. I also had a blast with the restored director's cut of Neil Young's unhinged, endearingly shambolic musical comedy *Human Highway* (1982), which featured, among other delights, Dennis Hopper as a burger-flipping lunatic named Cracker. These films, alongside *The Tribe*, provided a much-needed frisson of genuine weirdness. 

i *The Tribe*, *Timbuktu*, *Whiplash*, *Charlie's Country*, *The Duke of Burgundy*, *Second Coming*, *The Face of an Angel*, *National Diploma*, and *Men, Women & Children* will screen at the LFF (8-19 October)

TORONTO TOP TEN

1. **Murder In Pacot** (below) Raoul Peck
2. **Timbuktu** Abderrahmane Sissako
3. **Force Majeure** Ruben Ostlund
4. **Second Coming** Debbie Tucker Green
5. **Whiplash** Damien Chazelle
6. **Charlie's Country** Rolf de Heer
7. **The Tribe** Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy
8. **Mirage** Szabolcs Hajdu
9. **The Duke of Burgundy** Peter Strickland
10. **Stories of our Lives** Nest Collective



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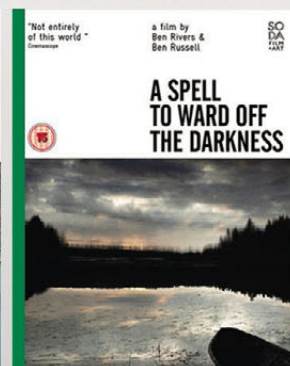
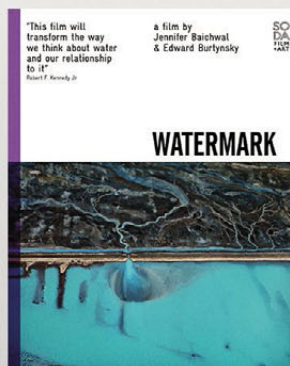
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OUT OF THE PAST
Mike Leigh (left, on set) constructed a version of 19th-century Britain with his usual fastidious attention to detail in *Mr. Turner*, in which Timothy Spall plays the titular artist (right)



A DAB HAND

Mike Leigh's 'Mr. Turner' painstakingly recreates the world of the Romantic landscape painter to illuminate the artist's creative process. The director explains the challenge of portraying the details of a life in broad brushstrokes and why Timothy Spall was exactly 'the right man for the job'

By Isabel Stevens

"Turner is a very uninteresting man to write about," complained A.J. Finberg when working on his biography of the British Romantic painter in the 1930s. "His virtues and defects are all on the drab side. Everything interesting about him appeared only in his work." Not according to Mike Leigh. For 15 years the British director dreamt of making a film about J.M.W. Turner. His tragicomedy, drawn from biography but related with a healthy dose of creative licence, reveals a fascinating, larger-than-life and very contradictory character. "A man on a mission" is how Leigh describes his and Timothy Spall's portrayal of Turner in his mid to late years – an artist consumed by wanderlust, furiously interpreting the world with paint and ink, "a passionate poetic clairvoyant" according to Leigh, but also "a very mortal, eccentric curmudgeon", generous and tender to some of his acquaintances and family, heartless to others. Spall's nuanced performance is alive to both the jovial and surly sides of the artist, a figure whose behaviour, appearance and mannerisms rarely embody the gentle, picturesque qualities of his paintings of moonlit ruins, seascapes or sunsets.

As with all of Leigh's films, the characters in *Mr. Turner* arose out of an intensive period of research and then improvisation "to define who they are, how they move, walk, talk, where they've come from, their lives, their parents' education, their tastes, their religion, politics, gastronomic proclivities, you name it". This involved Marion Bailey (who plays Turner's mistress Mrs Booth) studying early sound recordings of Margate residents at the British Library, and Spall spending two years learning how to paint ("We weren't going to cut to somebody

else's hand in close-up") and evolving Turner's guttural repertoire out of a page-long account of how the artist spoke. Meanwhile Leigh's exhaustive attention to detail meant only selecting actors who could actually paint to play Turner's fellow Royal Academicians, and spending a lot of time recreating Turner's world – building his studio on to a Victorian house in Woolwich, recreating the Royal Academy at a disused Sheffield stately home, and even moving a steam train from Manchester's Museum of Science and Industry to Wales to reconstruct the artist's famous invocation of modernity hurtling out of the natural world, *Rain, Steam, and Speed*.

Isabel Stevens: When did you first encounter Turner?

Mike Leigh: By the time I was 14 I had postcards of Picasso and the Impressionists – and Salvador Dalí. We all thought surrealism was wonderful as teenagers in the 50s. Turner and Constable were on chocolate boxes and biscuit tins and below the radar. I thought landscapes were boring and not radical. It wasn't until I was at Camberwell Art School in the early to mid 60s that I started to get Turner. He grows on you, he's so massive and went through so many different phases.

IS: Did you always plan to concentrate on his later years?

ML: I started to think about the film after we made *Topsy-Turvy* and started to read about Turner the character. It became clear that for a variety of reasons it would make sense to look at the back-end of his life – partly because I felt that everything I could say about him could be said in that timespan and partly because you can sort of feed in biographical backstory without it being too clunky. In the film you get that his father





encouraged him and sold his paintings and that his mother was in the loony bin. A biopic becomes a kind of faintly ludicrous charade. We would have had to find a small fat boy who looks like Timothy Spall and who could paint, for a start. All that is kind of daft really. Tim could of course do him from 1826 to 1851, with a little help from our make-up designer Christine Blundell. It's also when all the interesting things happen – it's when he became more and more radical and people didn't get it, the death of his father which had a profound affect on him, his relationship with Mrs Booth.

IS: Did you have Timothy Spall in mind from the start?

ML: Yes, I know him and have worked with him lots. He's a consummate character actor and a Londoner with a working-class background – and there's something about Turner that you just knew he could get. The truth is that Turner was a very little man and whatever else you can say about Tim, you can't accuse him of being a little man. But in terms of the spirit and the nature of Turner, it felt right. Also he has read his Dickens and he did a very good 19th-century actor in *Topsy-Turvy* and he's good with language. Also I knew that he had some amateur pretensions at drawing and painting a bit. He seemed like the right man for the job.

IS: There are a handful of biopics about Van Gogh, but there hasn't been one about Turner before.

ML: Had there been a famous film about Turner, I quite conceivably would have thought twice about it. One of the frustrations of not being able to make it for so many years was that I was terrified I'd wake up one morning and someone was going to do one. There was a play about Turner at the Arcola Theatre [in London] that made my producer and I very twitchy. The fact that there wasn't a film seemed like a jolly good reason to make one. There have been some telly ones. There was quite an interesting one with Leo McKern as Turner [*The Sun Is God*, 1974], but it was a dramatised documentary. *Mr. Turner* in no way affects to be a documentary. It is a reflection on and a distillation of Turner, and a poetic film.

IS: Did you watch any artist biopics beforehand?

ML: There's a whole bunch of these films and I watched quite a lot. It's not something I'm normally disposed to do. Like all filmmakers, I watch a lot of movies and they inform how I think cinematically. But I did deliberately

do that, out of interest really. I like Alexander Korda's *Rembrandt* [1936] and Robert Altman's *Vincent & Theo* [1990]. There are some crazy films, like John Huston's *Moulin Rouge* [1952] with José Ferrer walking around on his knees as Toulouse-Lautrec. *Lust for Life* [1956] is fairly ludicrous, with Kirk Douglas as Van Gogh. I was very fond of Derek Jarman and he made some very nice films. But *Caravaggio* is profoundly boring – nothing happens. Everyone in it was busy being gorgeous. There's no character or anything. The film about Francis Bacon [John Maybury's *Love Is the Devil*, 1998] suffered terribly because the Bacon estate wouldn't let them use the actual images. If that had happened on this film, we would have walked away.

IS: Was there anything particularly lacking from these films that you wanted to include or emphasise in *Mr. Turner*?

ML: I didn't set out thinking, they failed here, they didn't do this – you just think about what needs to be done. But I don't think I've seen a film about a painter where you really see him get dirty and really roll up his sleeves. You certainly don't see pigment being ground and so on.

IS: And the physical act of Turner painting is very much a performance in the film.

ML: That's what Turner would do. He would do a whole number at the varnishing day [the private view before an exhibition opening] at the Royal Academy – spitting and so forth. He was totally consumed.

IS: The way you show him presenting his paintings to potential buyers, making them stand in a dark room before he allowed them to view the works, is quite theatrical too.

ML: He and his father actually did do that routine. And he had a peephole to look at their reactions. You couldn't make that up.

IS: When you were making *Topsy-Turvy*, you had Sullivan's diaries to refer to, but Turner never kept a diary.

ML: There are three answers to that. There are specific descriptions of Turner. A lot of it comes from general research. The third is being creative, inventive and making it up. For example, there's no question that Hannah Danby was his housekeeper for 40 years, but their sexual relationship came very organically out of the work we were doing with the characters. And if in any way it felt wrong or inconsistent with what we thought was his character or her character we wouldn't have done it.

A full biopic becomes a kind of faintly ludicrous charade. We would have had to find a small fat boy who looks like Timothy Spall and who could paint, for a start

IS: The film reconstructs a number of Turner's paintings. How did you decide which to focus on?

ML: If you're going to make a film about an iconic painter, it would be eccentric if you only saw the lesser-known or esoteric works. You're giving the audience the opportunity to flesh out the received iconic perception and image of Turner. The choices were all made on what's appropriate for the action, what's not an anachronism.

And when [Scottish scientist and mathematician] Mary Somerville visits his gallery and looks at various paintings, that was a useful device to have Turner commenting on them and explaining them without being clunky. There's this fantastic painting of Hannibal crossing the Alps and Turner just says "hubris". Any other painter would fill the canvas with massive elephants and here they are dwarfed by the universe. And so us putting in what essentially is a gag about not being able to find the elephants and us tracking in and tracking out and all that stuff, builds in what I hope is a digestible and subtle lesson about that painting. Finally you get to the most popular painting of all, *The Fighting Temeraire*. The ability to bring it to life, to make it chug along, all done by the CGI guys with our collaboration, it's just a gas.

IS: In the scenes where you show Turner sketching and painting outside, how did you approach translating his paintings on to film?

ML: Because it took us a hell of a long time to get the backing, we [Leigh and regular cinematographer Dick Pope] had from 1999 onwards to talk about it... We agreed obviously that it would need to have the look and spirit of his work. We were able to look at the paintings and drawings and colour charts in the Tate and eventually shoot tests. It is of significance that we shot the film on an Alexa, a digital camera. The fact isn't, "Oh god, we didn't shoot on film." It's, "Here is this new set of very clever magic tools, let's embrace it and see what we can do with it." Dick's decision to use a set of Panchromatic lenses from the 1940s on the camera, that also did something for the subtle quality of the images. And somebody was on our side a lot of the time when we were shooting – we had a lot of good fortune with light and weather.

IS: And being able to shoot outside was vital on this film, compared with *Topsy-Turvy*.

ML: The thing about *Topsy-Turvy*, it actually cost £10 million. This film cost £8.4 million and that's 15 years later. People think that's strange and that it would be more

THE START OF THE AFFAIR Hannah Danby, played by Dorothy Atkinson (below), was the artist's housekeeper for 40 years, but the director introduced a sexual dimension to their relationship in the film for which there is no historical basis; Spall as the artist in *Mr. Turner* (left)

expensive, but if you think about it – an actual working theatre for five weeks, 30 actors playing chorus, the rest playing the principals, a whole other bunch of people playing the orchestra, interior lights, et cetera, actually it cost more. Going up a mountain in Snowdonia with Tim Spall and a small crew was a lot cheaper. With *Topsy-Turvy*, we said, "Okay, sod it, we won't bother with exteriors apart from one or two." But with this we had no choice.

IS: In the film, Turner often offers the most acute interpretations of his paintings. The critic John Ruskin, however, spouts the most florid prose and is a comic character.

ML: This film is not a tirade against critics by the way, as a few people have said. There was one prominent French critic in particular who didn't like the comic version of Ruskin, a character who is always depicted in an uncomic way. It seemed very natural that he's this priggish, opinionated, precocious overgrown schoolboy – though that's not what this film is about and there is another one kicking around about him [*Effie Gray*, see review page 72]. We see Ruskin's parents and that they indulged him. When he went to Oxford University, his mother went with him – he was very stunted in many ways. But he was a great commentator and a great defender of Turner, although he was also critical. And Turner did apparently take the piss out of him to some degree. So it was all very organic. But apart from anything else, we thought the wheeze of having a comic version of Ruskin was too good to resist.

IS: You seem very attracted to the 19th century, which was also the setting for *Topsy-Turvy*.

ML: I've always felt a certain thing for the 19th century... If I wanted to set a film set in the 12th century, the task of bringing to life the characters and the dialogue would be immensely difficult, whereas the 19th century hangs in our recent collective memory. It's all there in Dickens and Thackeray and Jane Austen.

IS: The film has such fun with 19th-century language. How do you work with it using improvisation?

ML: You get to the point where actors are improvising having read newspapers, Dickens, poetry. The truth of it is, there are actors and actors. There are hundreds of actors out there who are not bright and who just play themselves. They're not the actors I get. People make a jolly good stab of doing these characters in a sophisticated way. A large proportion of what comes out isn't bad actually. And then at the last stages of the rehearsal it's for me as the writer to edit it and say, "That works," or "They wouldn't say that – let's check out this, improve or consider that." So it all works not only in terms of period accuracy but dramatically, rhythmically and in terms of dramatic economy... Obviously when you script it, you do ordinary, basic rules of drama, which is to pare it down and work on it so you don't get something that's not sonorous. And I don't think twice about inventing period language, having someone say something that feels very accurate but may conceivably not actually be. At the same time I carry around books with me for reference. There's a great thing called 'The Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue', 1811. I picked up this years ago somewhere on Charing Cross Road and it's really useful. ☺

i **Mr. Turner screens at the London Film Festival on 10 and 11 October. It is released in UK cinemas on 31 October and is reviewed on page 82. The exhibition 'Late Turner: Painting Set Free' runs at Tate Britain, London, until 25 January**



PORTRAITS OF THE ARTISTS

Mike Leigh's *Mr. Turner* takes its place within a wide canvas of films drawing on the lives and work of artists and sculptors that stretches back to the earliest days of cinema

By Michael Brooke

The first thing that distinguishes Mike Leigh's new biopic from its many predecessors is the cap-doffing honorific: *Mr. Turner*. Artist biopics often tend towards the surname-only approach, as if the subject was part of a brusque military roll-call: *Basquiat* (1996), *Caravaggio* (1986), *Crumb* (1994), *Dalí* (1991), *Klimt* (2005), *Ligabue* (1978), *Modigliani* (2004), *Pirosmani* (1969), *Pollock* (2000), *Rembrandt* (1936), *Renoir* (2012), *Tatsumi* (2011), *Van Gogh* (1991), *Yumeji* (1991). If they're female, however, the pendulum generally swings towards overfamiliarity: *Artemisia* (Gentileschi, 1997), *Frida* (Kahlo, 2002), *SérAPHINE* (de Senlis, 2008), *The Passion of Marie* (Krøyer, 2012), although Camille Claudel has managed her full name on two separate occasions (1988 and 2013, the latter as *Camille Claudel 1915*). We have been on first-name terms with Van Gogh twice (*Vincent*, 1987; *Vincent & Theo*, 1990), Nikifor Krynicki got the affectionately possessive *My Nikifor* (2004), and the original title for *Andrei Rublev* (1966) was *The Passion According to Andrei*, a title that could equally have referred to its director Andrei Tarkovsky. Sometimes the name comes with additional adornments thrown in: *Goya's Ghosts* (2006), *Goya in Bordeaux* (1999), *Le Mystère Picasso* (1956), *Surviving Picasso* (1996), *Utamaro and His Five Women* (1947) or the more substantial mouthful *Love is the Devil: Study for a Portrait of Francis Bacon* (1998).

As even that exclusively name-based list confirms, the upstart seventh art has long been fascinated by the lives and creative processes of practitioners of more traditional visual media. Painters appeared as dramatic protagonists in films dating back to the Victorian era: Georges Méliès, who once considered a career as a painter himself, was one of the first to see the potential of fusing and sometimes intermingling still and static imagery in *A Tricky Painter's Fate* (1908), in which a mischievous artist tries to fool a train conductor into thinking that a railway carriage is full so that he can have it to himself. (Nearly a century later, Méliès would become a minor character in Raúl Ruiz's *Klimt*.)

Films about actual painters were



The suffering artist: Salma Hayek as Frida Kahlo in Julie Taymor's *Frida* (2002)



Painting the town: Derek Jacobi in *Love Is the Devil: Study for a Portrait of Francis Bacon* (1998)

considerably rarer at this time, although footage survives of Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919) at work right at the end of his life. In general, the lack of sound and colour seems to have been an inhibiting factor, because the number of feature-length artist biopics prior to the 1950s is minuscule – as listed above, there's Alexander Korda's *Rembrandt*, with Charles Laughton giving a memorably earthy take on the Dutch master, and Mizoguchi Kenji's *Utamaro and His Five Women*, about the 18th-century Japanese printmaker (its most indelibly erotic image being Utamaro painting directly on to the bare back of one of his models), while Albert Lewin's *The Moon and Sixpence* (1942) was inspired by the life of Paul Gauguin if it was not directly about him. The latter's final sequence was in Technicolor, graphically demonstrating what films about painters had lacked up to then – and when colour became a more regular commercial proposition, the number of artist biopics correspondingly grew.

John Huston's *Moulin Rouge* (1952) was a heavily fictionalised but unprecedentedly colourful portrait of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (José Ferrer), which devoted much creative energy towards recreating late 19th-century Paris in a fashion inspired by the artist's own paintings. By contrast, Vincente Minnelli's *Lust for Life* (1956) turned out to be more factually accurate than the Irving Stone bestseller that inspired it (it tackles Van Gogh's mental illness, but ignores the apocryphal ear-severing story) – and if both the film and Kirk Douglas's characterisation of the artist tend towards the melodramatic at times, this is entirely in keeping with its subject's intense canvases.

Van Gogh may well be the artist most frequently depicted by major filmmakers.

When colour became a more regular commercial proposition for films, the number of artist biopics correspondingly grew

Alain Resnais and Maurice Pialat both made short documentaries called *Van Gogh* (in 1948 and 1965), Paul Cox's feature-length *Vincent* (1987) had John Hurt reading Van Gogh's own letters, and Andrew Hutton's *Van Gogh: Painted with Words* (2010), starring Benedict Cumberbatch, fused documentary and drama. Martin Scorsese incongruously pops up as the painter in the middle of Akira Kurosawa's *Dreams* (1990), which also brought his 1890 canvas *Wheatfield with Crows* to quasi-expressionist life; Robert Altman's *Vincent & Theo* dramatises the turbulent relationship between the artist (Tim Roth) and his brother (Paul Rhys); while Pialat made another *Van Gogh* in 1991, this time devoting nearly three hours to the last three months of his life, with Jacques Dutronc in the title role.

More than 30 years earlier, Jacques Becker's *Les Amants de Montparnasse* (1958) took a similar approach to the final days of Amedeo Modigliani (Gérard Philipe), although appreciation of the film has tended to be overshadowed by the spooky coincidence of Philipe dying shortly after its completion, at roughly the same age as Modigliani. Carol Reed's *The Agony and the Ecstasy* (1965), also from an Irving Stone source, similarly focused on a comparatively short period of the life of Michelangelo Buonarroti (Charlton Heston): the painting of the Sistine Chapel ceiling under the critical eye of Pope Julius II (Rex Harrison) – in the process tackling the topic of artistic patronage and the surrounding

politics in greater than usual depth.

Strict historical accuracy was impossible in the case of the medieval icon painter Andrei Rublev, since little is known about his life. So rather than speculate about the inspiration for his greatest works (shown in a final colour sequence), Tarkovsky preferred to dramatise a lengthy period of the artist's creative silence. But it's more a visceral portrait of the violence and cruelty of the Middle Ages than a study of Rublev's art *per se*.

Unsurprisingly, several biopics have been made by filmmakers who themselves either started out as fine artists or pursued painting as a parallel career. Derek Jarman spent years trying to realise *Caravaggio* and ultimately had to make do with a comparatively tiny budget, but the impossibility of realising an *Agony and the Ecstasy*-scaled recreation of 17th-century Italy forced him to concoct more imaginative solutions, some of which were drawn from a keen knowledge of Caravaggio's own paintings – for instance, the deliberate anachronisms (a typewriter here, a calculator there) paid tribute to the artist's own penchant for adding then-contemporary details to ostensibly historical or Biblical subjects.

Former Jarman protégé John Maybury had more of a challenge with *Love Is the Devil*: although Derek Jacobi's casting as Francis Bacon and the recreation of his social milieu (particularly Soho's notorious Colony Room) couldn't be faulted, the Bacon estate refused permission for the film to reproduce the original paintings. Undaunted, Maybury and cinematographer John Mathieson used specifically cinematic tricks (distorting lenses and filters) to create an impression of Bacon's visual world.

Some films about painters focus



Road to ruin: Tim Roth as Vincent Van Gogh in *Vincent & Theo* (1990)



Jacques Dutronc as the artist in *Van Gogh* (1991)



Kirk Douglas as Van Gogh in *Lust for Life* (1956)

on individual paintings, as the titles of Peter Greenaway's *Nightwatching* (2007) and Lech Majewski's *The Mill and the Cross* (2011) indicate. Both feature dramatised depictions of, respectively, Rembrandt (Martin Freeman) and Pieter Bruegel the Elder (Rutger Hauer), but the actual contents of their paintings *The Night Watch* and *The Procession to Calvary* provide most of the creative fuel – in Greenaway's case through exploration of the notion that Rembrandt deliberately constructed a conspiracy theory within his painting (something explored further in a follow-up documentary from 2008, *Rembrandt's J'Accuse*), and in Majewski's through the highlighting of individual people featured in Bruegel's teeming canvas. Although previously a live-action filmmaker, Eric Khoo decided that animation was the most appropriate medium for *Tatsumi*, about the life and work of manga artist Tatsumi Yoshihiro, because it allowed a stylistically appropriate realisation of his grimly apocalyptic work.

Some films were driven by stars – *Pollock* was a passion project for Ed Harris (who also directed) and *Frida* for Salma Hayek, physically obvious natural casting for Jackson Pollock and Frida Kahlo respectively. But other films have benefited from more surprising casting. Though hamstrung by being in black and white, which scarcely did justice to its subject's paintings, Ken Russell's BBC drama *Always on Sunday* (1965) cast painter James Lloyd as Henri Rousseau, with Lloyd's strong Cheshire accent and palpable awkwardness in front of the camera vividly suggesting why the equally provincial Rousseau seemed out of place in the French art establishment (in this it foreshadows elements of *Mr. Turner*). Similarly, Giorgi Shengelaya's *Pirosmani*, about the Georgian painter Niko Piroshmanashvili, hired the artist Avto Varazi as both lead actor and art director. Even more adventurously, Krzysztof Krauze cast veteran actress Krystyna Feldman as Ukraine-born Polish-based Nikifor Krynicki. It would be impossible to guess without prior warning that a woman is under the facial stubble and toothbrush moustache: Nikifor's quavering, high-pitched voice seems entirely appropriate.

Sculptors have generally had fewer biopics, although the two Camille Claudel films are exceptions: the first, by Bruno Nuytten and starring Isabelle Adjani, concentrates on her stormy relationship with Auguste Rodin (Gérard Depardieu), while Bruno Dumont's take on events, with Juliette Binoche, concentrates on a period of intense psychological disturbance at the end of her creative career. Self-funded after Ken Russell realised it was the only way he was going to make it, *Savage Messiah* (1972) is an



Passion fruit: Antonio López García in Victor Erice's *The Quince Tree Sun*

unusually restrained and thoughtful portrait of French sculptor Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, with sets designed by Derek Jarman.

There is not enough space to do full justice to legions of documentaries, but several deserve mention for innovative approaches. *Edvard Munch* (1974) develops and refines a technique that its director Peter Watkins pioneered in *Culloden* (1964), whereby actors playing Munch and his associates are interviewed as though they were taking part in a talking-heads documentary – an approach that, far from seeming gimmicky or dry, paints a far more contextualised picture of Munch's cultural and social milieu than a conventional dramatisation might have achieved. The same year's *A Bigger Splash* (1974) saw Jack Hazan controversially transforming what its subject David Hockney believed to be documentary reportage into a semi-fictionalised drama. An early breakthrough for Ken Russell was the wildly innovative *Pop Goes the Easel* (1962), which sought to create a visual equivalent of the

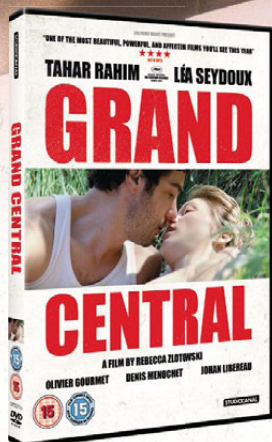
Jacques Rivette's 'La Belle Noiseuse' may be the most detailed study of a painter's creative process ever attempted



Piccoli and Béart in *La Belle Noiseuse*

then nascent pop-art movement. Henri-Georges Clouzot's *Le Mystère Picasso* featured the artist painting on specially treated canvases, so that the viewer could see the paintings evolve without the artist himself getting in the way. Most riveting of all, Victor Erice's *The Quince Tree Sun* (1992) concentrates on four months in the life of realist painter Antonio López García as he tries – and frequently fails – to capture the effect of light reacting to the leaves and fruit of the quince tree in his garden. Since Erice shares his subject's obsession with light, few other films capture a conscientious artist's painstaking attention to detail to quite the same degree.

Fictional painters would seem out of place in a survey of this kind, but Martin Scorsese's 40-minute *Life Lessons* (1989, part of the portmanteau film *New York Stories*) and Jacques Rivette's four-hour *La Belle Noiseuse* (1991) showcase unusually convincing studies of artists both in the studio and outside it. Although played by Nick Nolte and Michel Piccoli, respectively, their brushwork was by established painters Chuck Connelly and Bernard Tufour, and the latter film in particular turns the age-old cliché of the relationship between painter and model (Emmanuelle Béart) repeatedly on its head. (Rivette's much shorter alternative cut, *Divertimento*, doesn't cover the process of artistic creation to anything like the same impassioned degree.) Indeed, Rivette's original film may be the most detailed study of a painter's creative process yet attempted, partly because of the luxury of time denied the creators of more mainstream films, but also because he doesn't have to worry about sticking to the facts. But as many of the titles mentioned above amply demonstrate, even drawing material from actual lives can make for rich and involving cinema. *Mr. Turner* is merely the latest in a long and distinguished tradition. ☺



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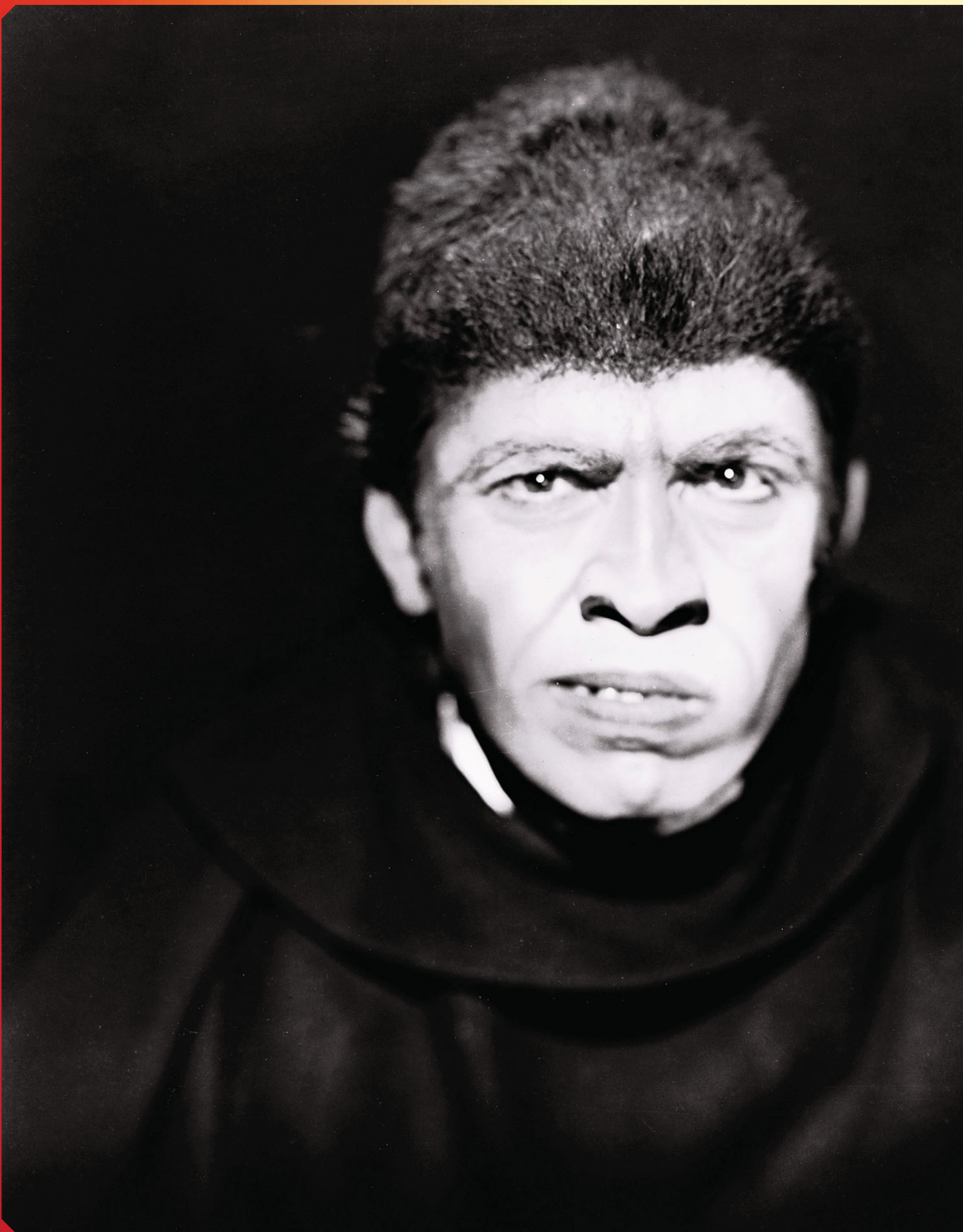


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DARWIN'S NIGHTMARES

The insidious altered states and transformations that abound in sci-fi cinema owe their genesis to the work of the great evolutionary biologist, and each new milestone in Darwinian theory, from 'The Selfish Gene' to the Human Genome Project, provides fresh material for filmmakers to adapt to

By Roger Luckhurst

In Ken Russell's delirious science-fiction film *Altered States* (1980), William Hurt plays a Harvard medic seeking to pin down the precise neurology of ecstatic mystical states. Like a proper hippy, he doses up on hallucinogenic drugs used in shamanic rituals to induce states of 'psychic atavism', a return to primordial consciousness. This being science fiction, the psychological metaphor of regression becomes a literal physical degeneration. Dr Jessup unleashes his simian Mr Hyde. When a technician is asked if the X-rays reveal anything "somewhat abnormal" after one of Jessup's funny turns, the man responds drily: "Somewhat. The guy's a fucking gorilla."

The emergence of science fiction as a popular genre in the 19th century is inextricably linked to the rise of Darwinism. Darwin's *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859) and the even more shocking extension of his theory in *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871), induced several traumas at once. It was a monistic theory, which is to say that it explained life and man solely through biological process. There was no secondary order of reality, no super-natural or spiritual sphere, no 'divine spark' of life. The theory required millions of years to work, placing man in the aeons of geological time, and made current physical forms merely temporary and bound to deep ancestral pasts. In 1860, the Bishop of Oxford asked with horror why men of science were going "into jubilation for his great-great-grandfather having been an ape or gorilla".

The theory also opened man to an unforeseeable future of evolutionary transformation. In Darwin's view, life was not directed, but profligate and superabundant, its forms necessarily plastic (that is, capable of adapting) in the face of mass slaughter and death in the unremitting struggle for existence. Far from being a "separate creation", Darwin argued, man was entirely embedded in these universal biological processes and was actually one of the most malleable and adaptive creatures. "In this respect," he concluded in *The Descent of Man*, humanity "resembles those forms called by naturalists protean and polymorphic".

Darwin tried to soothe his Victorian readers (and his own shattered nerves) by promising an optimistic path towards the perfectibility of man. Yet others worried that if humans could move up the evolutionary ladder,

might it not also be possible to move down? British science fiction was born out of the gothic romance, hounded by natural rather than supernatural agencies, and specifically by the fear of biological retrogression. Every respectable Dr Jekyll closets their Mr Hyde, every Dorian Gray hides their secret portrait of their true moral and physical degeneration.

Science fiction was one of the earliest popular forms to embed Darwin's transformative theories in cultural narrative. Some of the most compelling 'scientific romances' of the 1890s were by H.G. Wells, trained in biology by Darwin's bulldogs, Thomas Huxley and Edwin Ray Lankester. *The Time Machine* ended with a terrifying vision of post-human London, long after the extinction of man and on the verge of heat death. *The War of the Worlds* was an illustration of Darwin's thesis in *The Origin of Species* that each species in competition "will generally press hardest on its nearest kindred, and tend to exterminate them". Wells tilts at British colonial arrogance, the advanced Martians effortlessly dominating the imperial metropolis, only to be defeated by lowly microbes. In *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, Wells concocted a gruesome allegory of evolutionary degeneration as Moreau vivisects beasts into grotesque forms of men only to see them regress back to beasts again. Moreau's mad science disturbingly undercuts any secure boundary between human and animal. It leaves the lone survivor back in London permanently traumatised, waiting only for the mark of the animal to come "surging up" through the crowds of allegedly the most civilised city in the world.

These Wellsian evolutionary visions recur throughout the history of cinema, and from its earliest days. Within weeks of *The Time Machine* appearing in 1895, the cinema pioneer Robert William Paul applied for a patent that aimed to reproduce Wells's time-travelling experience by moving the audience past a series of Kinetographic projections. If this machine was never realised, it is common to observe that cinema is itself a kind of evolutionary time-travel device, able to freeze, slow down or speed up development, stage spectacular transformations, or bring the far-flung in space and time into the intimate here and now. From *The Human Ape* (1909) via the dinosaurs of

GOING APE
Rouben Mamoulian built *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1931) around the spectacular technical achievements of the transformation scenes, as Fredric March turns from matinee idol into lusty ape

➔ *The Lost World* (1925) to the pre-Code sexual selection of Fay Wray by *King Kong* (1933), the development of the cinema, as Barbara Creed has observed in *Darwin's Screens*, “owes much to Darwin”.

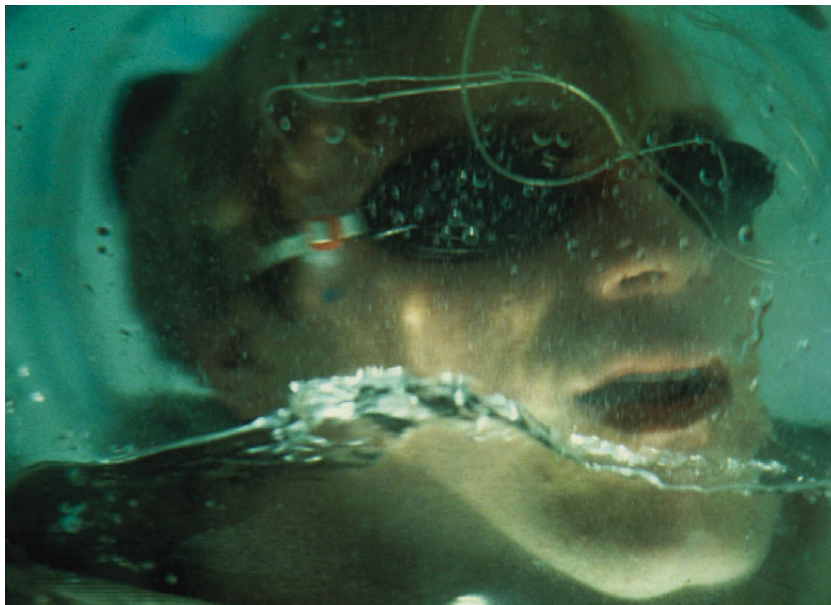
Altered States is embedded in a history that goes back to films such as *Joe, the Educated Orangoutang*, *Undressing* (1895). Since science-fiction films are so bound up with the spectacular special effect, perhaps it is unsurprising that this cinema repeatedly returns to scenes of biological transformation, the camera offering sublime or grotesque scenes of sudden catastrophic change, rendering magically visible the otherwise hidden springs of gradual evolution. A history of sci-fi cinema can thus be written as a history of the spectacle of ‘transformism’ (another Victorian term for developmental theories of evolution). Here are four key chapters.

MONSTERS, INC

In his history of science fiction, Brian Aldiss suggests that Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818) is the pioneering book that shifts the theological dreads of the first wave of the gothic into the purely physiological and materialist horrors of later science fiction. Victor’s nemesis is not spiritual, but his very material double, a dead thing animated by the electrical spark of life. James Whale’s *Frankenstein* (1931), of course, had its own crucial role in establishing a new genre of film that in the early 1930s stabilised around the term ‘horror’. Whale refocused the novel intensively on the laboratory and the patchwork body of the self-made monster. It was snipped here and there by the pre-Code censor (*Frankenstein* was not allowed to say at his moment of triumph, “In the name of God, now I know what it feels like to be God”), but Universal’s film was at least widely released.

This is more than could be said in some American states for *The Mystery of Life* (1931), a dry documentary in which evolutionary theory is explained by college professor H.M. Parshley and which was banned by some film boards as ‘indecent’. America was only a few short years from the Scopes Monkey Trial, in which schoolteacher John Scopes had been prosecuted by the State of Tennessee in 1925 for teaching evolutionary theory in his classroom. Perhaps this explains why there is such a Darwinian tinge to the 1930s cycle of American science-fiction horrors. Hollywood was not really abreast of the so-called ‘Darwinian synthesis’ of the 30s, which made genetic transmission the long-elusive vehicle of natural selection: it was still dealing with the foundational transgressions of Darwin’s dangerous ideas.

Rouben Mamoulian built the rhythm of his adaptation of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1931) around the spectacular technical accomplishment of the transformation scenes, as Fredric March turns from matinee idol into lusty ape. The cinema has obsessively adapted Stevenson’s classic of self-administered biological retrogression, as if marking its own technical development with performances of this transformation. The werewolf story, with its own myth of animalistic regression, was established in the cinema by *Werewolf of London* (1935). Meanwhile, evolutionary sports were the focus of Tod Browning’s notorious *Freaks* (1932), balanced on the other end of the scale by the gigantism of the evolutionary backwater of *King Kong* (1933). Quite where humanity now fitted into the ecology of nature perhaps contributed to the success



of *Tarzan the Ape Man* (1932), an adaptation of Edgar Rice Burroughs’s anxious meditation on the boundary of human and animal, although it was the erotic allure of the shots of the naked body of Olympic swimmer Josephine McKim in *Tarzan and His Mate* (1934) that eventually brought about the full enforcement of the laws of the Production Code Administration.

Perhaps the most overtly Darwinian film of this cycle was Erle C. Kenton’s lurid *Island of Lost Souls* (1932), with Charles Laughton playing a sinister and perverse version of Wells’s Dr Moreau. Unlike the book’s character, this Moreau is bent on engineering sexual selection, to prove his spliced beasts have reached proper human status. He tries this on between the marooned hero Parker and Lota, The Panther Woman, and later between the blonde leading lady and Ouran, the priapic ape, reverting to familiar racial melodrama. The film toys fairly overtly with the promise of miscegenation and bestial couplings, making The Panther Woman a site of intensely conflicted allure and disgust. The riotous beast men are led by Bela Lugosi in a memorable performance, leering into the camera in unnerving close-up, before effecting a revolution that overturns scientific authority. It was banned outright in many countries and refused a rerelease by the Production Code office in 1935 (which forbade depictions of interracial relationships), effectively banning it completely. The Australian film board invented a new category for the film, NEN (‘not to be exhibited to natives’), perhaps fearing the depiction of insurrection against the whip-hand of colonial control – and it was not shown in Britain until as late as 1959. Darwinian transformism clearly touched raw nerves.

THE SPECTRE OF THE BOMB

World War II ended abruptly with the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. The weapon was built by theoretical physicists working with the newly minted military-industrial complex. The scientists of the Manhattan Project gave the world a new index of man-made apocalypse, a device that could literalise long-held fantasies of post-disaster social regression or simply mass extinction. “Modern man is obsolete,”

If the official guide ‘How to Survive an Atomic Bomb’ was still calling radiation a mere ‘inconvenience’ in 1950, perhaps science fiction was the place to get the ugly, mutant truth

Norman Cousins famously declared in an editorial in the *Saturday Review* on 14 August 1945.

Although American military authorities tried to suppress every detail about radiation poisoning, declaring it Japanese or communist propaganda, the idea of genetic mutation through exposure to a radioactive 'mist of death' was a constant of science fiction. Mutants persecuted for their departures from the norm had been a staple of golden-age science fiction since the 1930s; it became more monstrous in the B-movie boom of the 1950s. As if to match the inconceivable sublimity of the atom bomb, gigantic atavistic creatures were stirred from the depths, as in *Godzilla* (*Gojira*, 1954) or *It Came from Beneath the Sea* (1955). Atmospheric nuclear testing transformed insects into giant mutations in *Tarantula* (1955) or the wonderfully atmospheric *Them!* (1954). Gordon Douglas's film holds off the sight of the bug-eyed monsters until the viewer is thoroughly rattled by eerie desert cries and windswept scenes of mysterious devastation. They nest in the network of tunnels in Los Angeles, the secret state straining to contain the truth of the catastrophe. In reverse, Jack Arnold's *The Incredible Shrinking Man* (1957) exposes the hero to a radioactive cloud and, as he begins to diminish, the everyday world becomes a vast defamiliarised landscape full of terrifying snares. J.G. Ballard always praised the pulp metaphysics of Arnold's rueful allegory of man's extinction, perhaps because he was writing his own fictions about the advent of the nuclear age as triggering an evolutionary eclipse, the American deserts and Pacific atolls where the test bombs flowered becoming mankind's terminal beaches.

B movies were still interested in monsters as evolutionary atavisms, as in the Amazonian backwater that hides the lusty *Creature from the Black Lagoon* (1954). But the most impressive films of this science-fiction cycle are those that dealt with more insidious altered states or transformations, ones that needed few special effects. In *I Married a Monster from Outer Space* (1958), a bride cannot fathom the weird transformation of her husband into an emotionless automaton. The film starts out as a study of Freudian angst but slowly unveils a conspiracy of alien invasion. This paranoid style reached a pinnacle with Don Siegel's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), in which 'pod people' steadily replace the town folk, ending with a memorable scene of Dr Bennell dementedly screaming

"You're next!" at cars on the highway. Extra last scenes were added, suggesting the state finally mobilising against the threat, but the virtue of some of the B movies was their suspicion of all authority and their implied critique of the deadening conformity of American suburban capitalist life. If the official American guide *How to Survive an Atomic Bomb* was still calling radiation a mere "inconvenience" in 1950, perhaps science fiction was the place to get the ugly, mutant truth.

Invasion of the Body Snatchers was updated for paranoid, post-Nixon America by Philip Kaufman in 1978, but the film significantly upgraded the special effects as the seed pods messily transform into dead ringers for their human victims. This sticky, abject birthing was an advent of a new phase of body-horror transformation.

BODY HORROR

What erupts from the chest of the hapless Kane in *Alien* (1979) is a new kind of splicing of the old dark house of the gothic with science fiction, low cultural gore with mainstream genre cinema. The notorious chest-bursting scene was said to have caused panic and vomiting at test screenings, as if the spectacle of bodily rupture implanted mimetic effects in its early audiences. *Alien* was a central film in a moment when the special-effects guys became superstars, the halcyon analogue days before the advent of CGI, when films raced to outdo each other with spectacular scenes of visceral transformation: David Kessler's sustained, agonising morph into a wolf, almost entirely on screen, in John Landis's *An American Werewolf in London* (1981); the riotous biological anarchy of the continually transforming alien in John Carpenter's remake of *The Thing* (1982); the eventual dissolution of Seth Brundle's human body into full merger with the DNA of a housefly in David Cronenberg's remake of *The Fly* (1986). Cyborg cinema effected similar fusions, this time of bodies and machines, from the oneiric logic of Cronenberg's *Videodrome* (1982) to the uncontrolled sexual hysteria of Tsukamoto Shinya's *Tetsuo: The Iron Man* (1989), where our unfortunate hero becomes as one with his phallic drill bit.

Eighties body horror registered a crisis in the perceived integrity of the body. Schwarzenegger and Stallone muscled up their defences, metallising their bodies, but did so with such anxious

MUTANT CHRONICLES
In Ken Russell's *Altered States* (left), Dr Jessup's psychic experiments play on anxieties about physical regression, while Cold War monster movies such as *Godzilla* (below, left) and *Them!* (below, right) tapped into popular fears about nuclear bombs and radiation





In a world where new 'bio-objects' can be constructed in vitro, we are increasingly surrounded by 'boundary crawlers', things that defy biological categories



reinforcement because everywhere the skin, the boundary that defines the self, seemed to be under threat. This was no longer just from alien invaders but from the body's own mutant processes, erupting from within. Critics point to various explanations for this cluster of science fictions, from the 'mutation' of economics at the end of the 1970s towards neoliberalism, or a significant leap in the processes of globalisation that began to break down national boundaries, or the profound technological reorientation of the sense of the body as virtual computer networks were established, or the fears of global pandemics, such as AIDS, first medically noted in 1982. But it is also worth pointing out that this was a significant era in Darwinian theory, too.

In 1976, Richard Dawkins published *The Selfish Gene*, a narrow neo-Darwinian restatement about each gene maximising benefit in a ruthless struggle for existence. The monsters of *Alien* and *The Thing* are relentless, murderous competitors, perfectly honed biological weapons for survival, against which weak human collectives collapse. They are emanations of the selfish gene. Dawkins also extended the idea of genes metaphorically to 'memes', which were 'mind-viruses' or 'information parasites', the so-called 'junk' DNA of ideas that remain encoded in humans long after their usefulness has gone – such as, Dawkins has not been shy to claim, all religious beliefs. These ideological stances, shared by philosopher Daniel Dennett and the founder of 'sociobiology' E.O. Wilson, spoke profoundly to their times: the selfish gene appeared to naturalise the 'greed is good' message of the new capitalist individualism. This was only one take on Darwin, for the 'selfish gene' has been countered by Lyn Margulis's notion of the 'social gene', and supported by more liberal biologists, who argue the evolutionary benefits of altruism, cooperation and inter-species cooperation. As in Darwin's time, the inflections of evolutionary theory have always been profoundly political.

BOUNDARY CRAWLERS

In 1984, the Human Genome Project announced that new scientific techniques and laboratory technologies could start the process of mapping the full genetic sequence of human DNA. This vast project fostered a host of science-fiction fantasies, from yet more post-*Alien* monstrous transformations, such as the *Species* cycle



(1998-2007), or the extremely poor scientific protocols that abound in the laboratory in *Splice* (2009). It also produced more sober reflections on dystopias built on genetic policing, as in *Gattaca* (1997) or *Code 46* (2003).

But since the human genome was finally mapped in 2000, biologists have found that it is merely something like a vast dictionary rather than a 'How to' guide, and DNA has been repositioned as only one element in a wider epigenetic understanding of evolution and life. The revolutions in molecular biology and biotechnology since 2000 have pressed hard on neo-Darwinian claims that the gene is the sole agent of evolution. In a world where the processes of life are becoming manipulable at the cellular level and wholly new 'bio-objects' can be constructed *in vitro*, we are increasingly surrounded by what have been evocatively called 'boundary crawlers', things that defy biological categories or exist somewhere between the natural and the artificial.

I suspect this is why science fiction is so interested in abject goo and tentacles these days, the squirming alterity of the octopoidal arms that loom in *The Mist* (2007) or on the edges of America in Gareth Edwards's *Monsters* (2010) or that splash around the Han river in Seoul in *The Host* (2006), or writhe so murderously in 3D in Ridley Scott's *Prometheus* (2012). These devices, borrowed from Lovecraft's materialist horrors, represent the formless, the unbounded, the protean transformational possibilities of life itself in images themselves constructed by SFX processes in which the organic and digital are increasingly impossible to distinguish. Now that the cinematic trick of transformism can be designed on a laptop, the malleability of the visual image uncannily matches our sense that biological processes have themselves become ungrounded from gradualist natural processes and entered a newly catastrophic phase. Science fact has finally caught up with Mary Shelley's fictional vision of the 'modern Prometheus'. It keeps science-fiction cinema chillingly relevant, a crucial register of the late thoughts of *Homo sapiens* in its potentially forever altered state, just before the reboot. 📺



This article is taken from *Sci-fi: Days of Fear and Wonder*, a compendium of essays published by the BFI on 21 October to accompany its major celebration of sci-fi, which runs from October to December and includes a season of films at BFI Southbank, London

GENE GENIE
The Human Genome Project helped inspire a range of sci-fi fantasies, such as 2009's *Splice* (above, left), while the monster lurking in the Han river of 2006's *The Host* (above, right) evokes a more formless, unbounded terror, suggestive of more recent biological ambiguities



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THE FUTURE IS HERE

While much big-screen sci-fi relies on splashy effects, plenty of less ostentatious films have made a virtue of their low budgets, either by cleverly employing the viewer's imagination to fill in the gaps at key moments, or by presenting a dystopian vision of the present to stand in for the future

By Jonathan Rosenbaum

In an amusing, satisfying and highly persuasive rant in *Time Out* in 1977, J.G. Ballard took on the cultural phenomenon of *Star Wars* (1977), including some of its historical and ideological consequences. Noting that “two hours of *Star Wars* must be one of the most efficient means of weaning your pre-teen child from any fear of, or sensitivity towards, the death of others”, he also reflected on the overall impact of George Lucas's blockbuster on science-fiction movies:

“The most popular form of s-f – space fiction – has been the least successful of all cinematically, until 2001 and *Star Wars*, for the obvious reason that the special effects available were hopelessly inadequate. Surprisingly, s-f is one of the most literary forms of all fiction, and the best s-f films – *Them!*, *Dr. Cyclops*, *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, *Alphaville*, *Last Year at Marienbad* (not a capricious choice, its themes are time, space and identity, s-f's triple pillars), *Dr. Strangelove*, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, *Barbarella* and *Solaris* – and the brave failures, such as *The Thing*, *Seconds* and *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, have all made use of comparatively modest special effects and relied on strongly imaginative ideas, and on ingenuity, wit and fantasy.

“With *Star Wars* the pendulum seems to be swinging the other way, towards huge but empty spectacles where the special effects – like the brilliantly designed space vehicles and their interiors in both *Star Wars* and 2001 – preside over unoriginal ideas and derivative plots, as in some massively financed stage musical where the sets and costumes are lavish but there are no tunes. I can't help feeling that in both these films the spectacular sets are the real subject matter, and that original and imaginative ideas – until now science fiction's chief claim to fame – are regarded by their makers as secondary, unimportant and even, possibly, distracting.”

One could of course quarrel with some of Ballard's particular choices and categories – such as why *Seconds*

qualifies as a “brave failure” alongside *Barbarella*'s presumed success, and whether *Last Year at Marienbad*, for all its imaginative displacements, really qualifies as science fiction in the first place. And Ballard's larger point about placing images and ideas in separate categories neglects the degree to which they interact and are mutually interdependent. This argument also seems to rule out the provocative ideas in 2001: *A Space Odyssey* (1968) as well as the striking images in George Lucas's *THX 1138* (1970) a film he fails to mention. But his larger point about sci-fi films commonly opting for either splashy and expensive effects or more conceptual forms of ingenuity seems to hold, even after one factors in the few cases such as 2001 and *Blade Runner* where the two seem equally present.

By stressing the capacity of *Star Wars* to foster either indifference or some form of exhilaration in relation to mass murder (a trait that arguably made the supposedly bloodless Gulf Wars and drones of future decades – not to mention a good many genocidal video games – much easier to promote and ‘sell’ in the public marketplace), Ballard wasn't implying the absence of any ideological baggage in the relatively ‘empty’ and derivative space operas. It hardly seems irrelevant that Lucas freely and consciously modelled some of his shots after prototypes from Leni Riefenstahl's Nazi recruitment epic, *Triumph of the Will* (1935), as well as from *Flash Gordon* serials and WWII aerial combat footage. Yet it seems no less significant that a major polemical and ideological point in many less ostentatious, idea-driven speculations is that the future has already arrived, and that the present and future are both locked into the same dystopian nightmare. This is true of *The Damned* (Joseph Losey, 1961), *The Most Dangerous Man Alive* (Allan Dwan, 1961), *La Jetée* (Chris Marker, 1962), *Dr. Strangelove* (Stanley Kubrick, 1964), *Alphaville* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1965), *The War Game* (Peter Watkins, 1965), *It Happened Here* (Kevin Brownlow, 1966), *Fahrenheit 451* (François

COST BENEFITS

Jean-Luc Godard used striking contemporary Parisian locations to create his vision of the future in *Alphaville* (above) in 1965, while in 1977 *Star Wars* (right) helped set a trend for expensive special effects



BE: NATIONAL ARCHIVE (2) PHOTO: JEFFREY MAYER



Truffaut, 1966), *Seconds* (John Frankenheimer, 1966), *Privilege* (Watkins, 1967), *Je t'aime, je t'aime* (Alain Resnais, 1968), *The Gladiators* (Watkins, 1969), *Mr. Freedom* (William Klein, 1969), *Ice* (Robert Kramer, 1970), *Punishment Park* (Watkins, 1971), *Glen and Randa* (Jim McBride, 1971), *A Clockwork Orange* (Stanley Kubrick, 1971), *THX 1138* (Lucas, 1971), *Solaris* (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1972) and *Stalker* (Tarkovsky, 1979). In all these films, to varying degrees, shooting 'on location' – or at least on sets that feel contemporary – are commonly made to seem like peering into the future. (If the space station in *Solaris* represents a more conventional projection into the future, the lengthy highway sequence preceding it is a more precise example of what I mean.)

Properly speaking, Brownlow's *It Happened Here* – an intricate imagining of England in 1944 if it had lost the war in 1940 and been occupied by the Germans – qualifies as science fiction and his second feature, *Winstanley* (1975) – an account of the failed effort of a nonviolent religious sect called the Diggers to establish a commune in Surrey in 1649 – qualifies as history, a period piece. But to my mind both films are a kind of science fiction, insofar as a vanished era becomes the focus of the sort of curiosity and wonder commonly reserved for the future. In part because of the fanaticism about period details, both works are theoretically and stylistically somewhat naive movies, endowing the past with a voluptuous sense of mystery rarely found in more accomplished pictures. By the same token, however, one could cite a comparable sense of awe and mystery in such accomplished period epics as Watkins's *Culloden* (1964) and Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon* (1975) – displaying a passionate curiosity that closely parallels some of their earlier forays into science fiction.

Some of the same reverence towards the historical past that I associate with Brownlow, Kubrick and Watkins can be found in such equally neglected features as Stanley Kwan's *Centre Stage* (aka *Actress*, 1991) and Richard Linklater's *The Newton Boys* (1998). Neither of these can remotely be considered as science fiction, but both induce a sense of wonder in relation to space and the viewer's imagination. In contrast to the reductive nostalgia of Disneyland and Disney World's 'Main Street U.S.A.' – where every brick and shingle is five-eighths the original size so we won't feel overwhelmed by the world of our ancestors – the depiction of the 1920s in both these films makes them seem, if anything, *more* spatially vast than the present. And a similar sense of vastness and infinite reaches is conveyed in such relatively big-budget sci-fi films as *This Island Earth* (Joseph M. Newman, 1955), *Forbidden Planet* (Fred M. Wilcox, 1956), *2001* and *Solaris*.



BACK TO THE FUTURE
In many low-budget sci-fi films a central ideological tenet is that the future has already arrived, as in (below, left to right) *It Happened Here*, *The War Game*, *Seconds* and (far right) *THX 1138*; French magazine *Midi-Minuit Fantastique* (above)

Another special case is Klein's *Mr. Freedom*, arguably closer to satire and political allegory than to science fiction *per se*, although I've cited it nonetheless for its use of contemporary locations to suggest the future. More broadly speaking, this feature and the very different *Mariénbad*, as well as Cocteau's *Orphée* (1950), *Alphaville* and *Je t'aime, je t'aime*, all belong to a special French category known as *fantastique*, a branch of cinema with less reliance on science and closer ties to comic strips and surrealism. One magazine, the attractive, large-format *Midi-Minuit Fantastique*, which once featured *Mr. Freedom* on its cover, was devoted expressly to this subgenre, and lasted for almost a decade, from 1962-71.

As the 20 titles listed above suggest, the 60s and 70s were clearly the golden age of dystopian science-fiction films. Many of them stemmed directly from Cold War anxiety about the Bomb and radiation, but others ranging from *Mariénbad*, *Seconds* and *2001* to *Solaris* and John Boorman's *Zardoz* (1974) were more grounded in metaphysical uncertainties. (Back in the 50s, Don Siegel's 1956 *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and Jack Arnold's 1957 *The Incredible Shrinking Man* managed to combine their metaphysical aspects with Cold War fears, much as *Alphaville* would do later.) What virtually all these films had in common, in striking contradistinction to the relative gleefulness of *Star Wars*, was their pessimistic view of the future.

The degree to which this vision was intentional or an inadvertent product of circumstance clearly varied a lot. One might argue, for instance, that Godard, mapping out *Alphaville* in terms of genre, had neither the budget nor the particular skills needed to create future cityscapes in alternative solar systems, so existing Paris locations had to stand in for these – even though he would consciously capitalise on this limitation by inserting satirical parallels, so that, for instance, postwar low-income housing (*les habitations à loyers modiques*) become the clinics and madhouses of the future (*Les Hôpitaux de la longue maladie*). Furthermore, the generic and stylistic parallels Godard found between science fiction and German expressionist cinema (*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Destiny*, *Nosferatu*, *The Last Laugh*, *Metropolis*, *Faust*, *Sunrise*), film noir (*The Big Sleep*, *Mr. Arkadin*, *Kiss Me Deadly*), and the surreal cityscapes of Cocteau in *Orphée* and Orson Welles's version of Kafka (*The Trial*), turned *Alphaville* into a kind of film criticism composed in the language of the medium and built around these multiple references. Godard once admitted to me in an interview that he only became fully aware of this critical activity years later – before he made chapter 3b of his *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, where he fully acknowledges the relationship between



BE NATIONAL ARCHIVE (3)

Alphaville and the play between brightness and darkness in both German expressionist cinema and *film noir* by superimposing funereal images of candles and deathly gloom from Fritz Lang's *Destiny* (1921) over stretches of his own film.

In his 2005 book about *Alphaville*, Chris Darke expands on this notion by pointing out – and presenting substantial supportive evidence – that both of the principal alleged ‘genres’ that Godard is cross-referencing throughout the film, German expressionist cinema and *film noir*, are basically inventions of French criticism in the 1950s. Lotte H. Eisner first formulated the former in *L'Ecran démoniaque: Influence de Max Reinhardt et de l'expressionisme* in 1952 (revised and expanded in 1965, and translated into English as *The Haunted Screen* in 1969), and Raymond Borde and Etienne Chaumeton the latter in *Panorama du film noir américain* in 1955. And indeed, part of the conceptual brilliance of *Alphaville* can be seen in the various ways that Godard folds in other historical and geographical markers that exhibit related traits and tendencies: memories of the French Occupation in *Orphée*, the postwar and post-Holocaust view of Kafka offered by Welles in *The Trial*, the Franco-American ambience of Lemmy Caution thrillers, the Franco-Soviet alliances suggested by Caution's alleged employer (*Figaro-Pravda*), and so on.

Later on, George Lucas, a less political and less critical-minded cinematic magpie, used many locations from northern California in *THX 1138* to suggest the future via the present, along with pronounced visual echoes of Godard (white on white) and Michelangelo Antonioni (off-centre framing) in his own ‘Scope compositions. (Strictly speaking, Antonioni didn't make science-fiction films, but there are nonetheless suggestions of dystopia threaded through much of his work – especially in the stretch from *L'Eclisse* in 1962 to *Zabriskie Point* in 1970, including *Red Desert*, his 1965 short *Il provino* and *Blow-Up*).

More systematically, all four of Watkins's dystopian films cited above are founded on the principle of using pseudo-documentary techniques to project the present into the future with a minimum of fuss and a maximum of believability – extensions of the same basic principles that yielded Welles's celebrated radio adaptation of *The War of the Worlds* in 1938 and the parody of a *March of Time* newsreel in the opening stretches of *Citizen Kane* three years later, not to mention scores of subsequent ‘mockumentaries’ such as *This Is Spinal Tap* (1984). One could indeed argue that, apart from *Alphaville*, *The War Game* was probably the most influential single low-budget sci-fi film of the 60s, although thanks to the film's initial suppression and the outsider status of Watkins in relation to the British film industry, it would take many years for its impact to register and be fully absorbed within the mainstream.

Science fiction without fancy production values doesn't necessarily entail small budgets. Consider such pricier black-and-white productions as the relatively square *On the Beach* (Stanley Kramer, 1959) and the relatively hip *The Manchurian Candidate* (John Frankenheimer, 1962), where the budgets went mainly for the stars (Gregory Peck, Ava Gardner, Fred Astaire and Anthony Perkins in the former; Frank Sinatra, Laurence Harvey and Janet Leigh in the latter) rather than any special effects. It could be argued, however, that one *tour*



de force sequence in the latter film, equal to some of the disorienting displacements in *Marienbad* – in which a ladies' garden club mutates into a Chinese communist demonstration of brainwashing within the space of the same panning 360-degree camera movement – qualifies as a special effect in its own right.

One salient factor in science-fiction films overlooked by Ballard is the degree to which clever, strategic employments of the viewer's imagination can sometimes count for as much as expensive special effects – and can indeed maximise the impact of those special effects when they finally arrive. It's worth recalling that the giant ants in *Them!* (Gordon Douglas, 1954) don't make their initial on-screen appearance until a full half-hour into the story, a third of the way through, and the use of sound effects prior to their entrance is as effective as in any of Val Lewton's low-budget chillers a decade earlier. For that matter, the invading monsters in *The Thing from Another World* (Christian Nyby, 1951) and *The War of the Worlds* (Byron Haskin, 1953) took even longer to make their full on-screen entrances. And even *Star Wars* works on the assumption that the enchantment of any creature, landscape, gadget or set decreases in ratio to the length of time it's on the screen – a withholding premise already evident in both the Krel episodes of *Forbidden Planet* and the brief, last-minute glimpses of a perishing otherworldly city in *This Island Earth*. Nothing incidental or scenic (such as the twin moons of Tatooine, or the binoculars Luke uses while scouting for R2-D2) is allowed to slow down the rapidly paced narrative, but is generally packed along en route. (A rare exception is made for diverse beasts in the Mos Eisley western saloon sequence, where spectacle for once triumphs over event, significantly occasioning the greatest amount of scorn and ridicule from Ballard: “The parade of extraterrestrials... comes on hilariously like *The Muppet Show*, with shaggy monsters growling and rolling their eyeballs. I almost expected Kermit and Miss Piggy to swoop in and introduce Bruce Forsyth.”) All of which suggests that the notion of economy in science-fiction cinema isn't simply a matter of budgets and profits, but also a matter of many other kinds of investments and expenditures, on the part of viewers as well as filmmakers. ☹

Even ‘Star Wars’ works on the assumption that the enchantment of any creature, landscape, gadget or set decreases in ratio to the length of time it’s on the screen

BIRTH OF THE METHOD

THE REVOLUTION IN AMERICAN ACTING

Born from the experimental work of Constantin Stanislavski at the Moscow Art Theatre in the early 20th century and incubated in the 1930s at New York's pioneering Group Theatre, Method acting exploded on to the stage and screen in the US at the end of the 40s and early 50s in the work of a new generation of actors such as Montgomery Clift, James Dean, Marlon Brando and Julie Harris. **Foster Hirsch** explores the history of the new style, outlining the numerous 'methods' behind the process, while **James Bell** introduces the 12 films showing in our accompanying season



Is it fair to say that Marlon Brando's performance in Elia Kazan's 1947 Broadway production of *A Streetcar Named Desire* introduced a new style in American acting? As Stanley Kowalski, his coiled body language and delivery of dialogue, pitted with pauses, stumbling, mumbled repetition and backtracking, carried a visceral charge. Critics and audiences at the time knew they were privileged witnesses of a shift in the representation of human behaviour. Brando's mimetic skills seemed more real – more true to life – and more intense, vibrant and electric than earlier acting styles on either stage or screen. With his compelling presence he even seemed, subversively, to be rewriting Tennessee Williams's play: ostensibly he was cast as the antagonist, a brute who causes the destruction of vulnerable Southern aristocrat Blanche DuBois, yet audiences began to root for Stanley and to snicker at Jessica Tandy as Blanche, unable to hold her own against the force of nature embodied by her novice co-star. Brando's dual register – he was both attractive and scary, tender and intimidating – accurately reflected contradictions in the playwright himself: Williams, like his quicksilver heroine Blanche a combination of puritanism and promiscuity, was both drawn to and fearful of Stanley's potency. When he directed the film version in 1950, Kazan, who had come to feel that Brando's pulverising magnetism unbalanced the play, took care to put the focus on Blanche (played by Vivien Leigh, a stronger adversary than Tandy). Even subdued, however, Brando's film performance remains a startling benchmark in the history of American film acting: a prime example of a style that came to be known as the Method.

While this performance of America's greatest actor was revelatory, it had ample historical precedent. The roots of the 'new' style Brando incarnated reached back to the work of Stanislavski at the Moscow Art Theatre at the turn of the 20th century, when the impresario

began to ask probing questions about the ancient art of acting that no one had ever asked before in exactly the same way: how do actors act? What is the process actors undertake in order to create the simulation of a fully dimensioned, alive-in-the-moment human being? As he developed exercises designed to unlock the sources of the actor's inspiration, Stanislavski remained remarkably open-minded. To its founder, the Stanislavski System (as the ensemble of exercises that grew out of his investigations came to be called) of necessity remained fluid. In his never-ending pursuit, the readiness was all.

It is worth noting that Stanislavski developed the foundation of his System while he and his company worked on the plays of Chekhov, whose characters speak in cryptic and indirect ways. As Stanislavski and his actors realised, the real drama in Chekhov's work takes place beneath and between the words – in a palpitating subtext, a knot of feelings that defy spoken language.

When the Moscow Art Theatre appeared on Broadway in 1923, the response was rapturous. In place of the usual egocentric star acting that had been the American custom, Stanislavski's company performed as a unified ensemble who seemed to be living their roles. Two members of the Russian troupe remained behind, and at the American Laboratory Theatre, sponsored by wealthy American patrons, they began to instruct American actors in the principles of the Stanislavski System.

In 1931, inspired by the Russian ensemble, three young theatre enthusiasts, director Harold Clurman, actor-director Lee Strasberg and producer Cheryl Crawford, co-founded the Group

Brando's mimetic skills seemed more real and more intense and electric than earlier acting styles on either stage or screen

Theatre. Their goal was to train hand-picked actors in an adaptation of the Stanislavski System. Despite internecine conflicts and defections, the Group pioneers lasted on Broadway for ten years. The company did not produce any plays of lasting value – their house dramatist was Clifford Odets, whose lyrical works about the impact of the Depression on working-class families now seem both overwritten and dated – but it created actors passionate about studying their craft who were to become America's most influential acting teachers. Out of the Group emerged Strasberg, Stella Adler, Robert Lewis and Sanford Meisner – who were to remain the high priests of actor training for the rest of their long lives – as well as Elia Kazan, America's foremost director of actors. Although they were in agreement about the qualities necessary for good acting, these members of the misnamed Group Theatre had bitter doctrinal disputes.

The principal antagonists were Strasberg, a remote, bookish man with a deadpan expression, and Adler, who had the high-flown manner of a theatrical *grande dame*. Reflecting their personalities, Strasberg pushed actors to go inward to examine their own lives, while Adler urged her students to get out of themselves and develop their imaginations. To Strasberg, the actor's work on his or her psyche took precedence over the playwright's words; to Adler, the (great) play was always the thing. Their battle was joined in 1934 when, after having studied with Stanislavski in Paris, Adler announced to Strasberg in front of the Group that they were mangling the master's System. Forty-eight years later, on the day of Strasberg's death, Adler announced to her class that "it will take 100 years for the American theatre to recover from the damage that man has caused".

However, their conflict points up a fundamental misconception that there is a singular process called the Method. As Stanislavski himself insisted, no one





KOBAL COLLECTION (C)

Class act: Marlon Brando gave the quintessential Method performance as Terry Malloy in Elia Kazan's *On the Waterfront* (1954)

method or system could presume to solve the mysteries of how acting is created. It's convenient to refer to *the* Method, but in fact there are many methods.

When the Group disbanded, the idealistic impulse behind it continued. Six years later three Group veterans – Kazan, Lewis and Crawford – co-founded the Actors Studio as a workshop for actors, a place to go to practise in a private environment. When Lewis abruptly resigned after one year and Kazan was too busy professionally to continue as the Studio's main moderator (Crawford functioned as a producer only), Strasberg was invited to teach. He was appointed artistic director in 1951 and remained on the job until his death in 1982. It was here, in a converted church a few blocks west of Broadway on West 44th Street, under Strasberg's watchful – some would say tyrannical – supervision, that Stanislavski's System was transformed into the American Method. Virtually every major actor of the postwar era attended the Studio and, whether acolyte or foe, to some extent absorbed Strasberg's lessons.

The cornerstone of Strasberg's approach was a technique known as affective memory or emotional recall – which remains controversial and which Stanislavski had come to distrust – to be used when the actor cannot produce the emotion needed for a scene. (Strasberg accepted as an article of faith that the inability to produce genuine emotion was inevitable and recurrent, an occupational hazard; he felt it was his job to assist actors in excising whatever was blocking their access to fluent emotional expressiveness.) If, for example, an actor comes up dry in a scene in which his character has to respond to the death of a loved one, Strasberg trained the actor to recreate from his own memory the circumstances surrounding an analogous experience in his own life. He cautioned the actor not to go directly for the emotion but to recreate in his mind the atmosphere of the scene: the details of the room in which the death had occurred, the sensory recall of heat or cold, of light and dark. It was Strasberg's belief that if the actor could reconstruct the scene, the emotion would rise to the surface, almost like a Pavlovian reaction, and he could channel it directly into the moment in the play where it was needed.

Critics of Strasberg's Method claimed that his unrelenting focus on inner work neglected such external matters as voice and projection, and out of this common complaint emerged the stereotype of the mumbling, unwashed Method performer who ended up playing his or her own neuroses rather than the psychological truth of their character. To be sure, there are potential pitfalls in his Method, and Strasberg wasn't always scrupulous in protecting his actors from them. But, used with common sense, his Method sharpens and develops the gifts of talented actors.

At the Studio, and in the classes of Adler and Meisner and the other Group gurus, craft was examined in terms of theatrical performance and scenes were selected primarily from the work of noted American playwrights. But in fact the inner work practised at the Studio was ideally suited for the intimacy of film acting – and it was both apt and inevitable that the Studio's



All in the Method: Montgomery Clift with Elizabeth Taylor in *A Place in the Sun* (1951)

Method was presented to the world on television, on prestigious dramatic series such as *Studio One* and *Playhouse 90*, and popularised in four transcendently well-acted films by Elia Kazan: *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951), *On the Waterfront* (1954), *East of Eden* (1955) and *Baby Doll* (1956).

But was there no equivalent of the Method before the Studio or before the term itself became a household word? Was there no great acting in American films before the explosion of acting talent in the postwar period? The answer to both questions is, yes there was. Often causing consternation among disciples, Strasberg would cite movie stars of earlier generations, such as Gary Cooper and Spencer Tracy, who seemed to him to be doing the Method by instinct. With a glance, a silent reaction, a pause, a gesture, naturalists like Cooper and Tracy could convey a rich sense of their character's inner life. Strasberg often cited Garbo as a Method actress before the fact and Kazan hailed her Camille as the finest, most complete film performance by an actress he had ever seen.

However, it isn't usually Cooper, Tracy or Garbo who are cited as early Methodists but John Garfield, a refugee from the Group Theatre, who indeed was the first actor trained in the style to achieve Hollywood stardom. Garfield brought an unvarnished city-boy veneer to each of his roles, but his brand of realism didn't quite have the depth charges that Strasberg in class and Kazan on screen were in search of.

It is in the work of Montgomery Clift first, followed by Brando and then Dean, that the Method broke through to cinema. All three actors were popularly associated with the Actors Studio, though none attended regularly and Brando many times said that his mentor was Stella Adler rather

than Strasberg. Nonetheless the work of the three is marked by the kinetic projection of an inner life that for Strasberg embodied truth in acting. In *The Heiress* (1949) and *A Place in the Sun* (1951) Clift played characters with turbulent inner lives, people more wounded and vulnerable than most Hollywood representations of masculinity. As the suitor in *The Heiress* he is wonderfully hard to read – we can feel the presence of his character's busy inner monologue, but we can't be sure how to interpret it. Does Morris Townsend care for the rich woman he is courting and professes to love, or is he merely a fortune hunter? If we can answer the question before the character jilts Catherine at the end of act two, the suspense is undermined: William Wyler, the film's canny director, depended on Clift's ambiguity and privacy. When Morris returns at the end, pleading with Catherine for a second chance, Clift is notably different: now we can see his desperation, barely under control. In his bearing and posture, in the haunted look that now appears in his eyes, Clift supplies a rich subtext, a sense of what has happened to his character off screen, in the wings. Clift's inner style is famously displayed in the final scene in *A Place in the Sun* when his character, George Eastman, is in jail awaiting execution for having killed his girlfriend. Clift communicates Eastman's ambivalence about whether he is guilty as charged or innocent of the crime of murder: the actor's slumped posture, pained expression, heavy silences and verbal groping eloquently incarnate George's inner torment.

The dramatic conflict in *On the Waterfront* is also an inner struggle, as Terry Malloy slowly comes to terms with his complicity in the death of a friend. Brando acts on two levels: beneath the swagger of a ne'er-do-well the character has a hyperactive inner life which, by degrees, he is forced to confront. Terry's struggles come to a boil in the famed taxi scene with Rod Steiger as his mob-owned brother. "I coulda been a contender. I coulda been somebody instead of a bum, which is what I am," he announces at the climax of the cinema's greatest scene of

To this day actors who strive to create an illusion of spontaneity are working in a line established by Clift, Brando and Dean

self-recognition. After this epiphany, restored to himself, the character is freed to do what he must: testify against the capo who controls the waterfront. When his brother pulls a gun on him in the taxi, Brando's reaction reveals the kind of psychological realism the Method fosters. A superficial or conventional actor might well have pushed the gun away with an angry or fearful gesture, but Brando, thinking and reacting from deep within his character, touches the gun gently as he turns it away from him. "Charlie, Charlie," he murmurs in a soft voice choked with love.

Most Hollywood acting was star acting, in which the performer was expected to project the same winning persona from role to role. By contrast, the Method was intended to train actors to lose themselves in their roles, a strategy the career of Brando, the quintessential Method actor, bears out. Within a few short years in the mid-1950s Brando played Stanley Kowalski and Terry Malloy, two working-class characters who came to embody the Method; a beautifully spoken Mark Antony in *Julius Caesar* (1953); Napoleon with an elegant British accent in *Désirée* (1954); a dark-skinned but unaccented revolutionary in *Viva Zapata!* (1952); a wily Japanese interpreter in *The Teahouse of the August Moon* (1956); an inarticulate, slow-moving biker in *The Wild One* (1953); and a musical comedy gangster in *Guys and Dolls* (1955). Each time out the actor transformed his way with words as well as his movement. (Brando's mumble was a character choice; the actor himself had a clear, resonant voice and flawless diction.) In practice, however, most Method actors followed the star-acting model, transporting, like James Dean, a vivid persona from film to film.

Brando was a chameleon; Dean had a narrower range, but in his three film appearances played the role of a troubled teen with father issues



Method master: Lee Strasberg in 1956

with indelible vitality. On screen Dean was alive, spontaneous and intuitive in ways that before him only Clift and Brando had attained. The one time he had to depart from 'James Dean', in the last act of *Giant* (1956) when he had to impersonate an ageing alcoholic millionaire, he was uncomfortable. Unlike Brando, Dean did not speak well – he didn't have to. It was believable that his characters, festering with deep psychic wounds, struggle with language as they attempt to connect words with feelings. His most electric moment is the scene in *East of Eden* (1955) in which his character, Cal, is rejected by his father, Adam. When Adam spurns the boy's birthday gift, Dean clutches him, leaning in as if, to survive, he would have to ingest Adam, a cold man who cringes at Cal's overwrought display. (Offstage, Raymond Massey was repelled by Dean – Kazan stoked the animosity because he thought it was a way of getting a true response out of a

stiff actor untrained in the Method. It worked.) Inarticulate with grief, Cal turns away with a wrenching scream and then dashes out of the house with a scurrying, animal-like movement.

Clift, Brando and Dean – the exquisite Method triumvirate – became perhaps the most widely imitated actors in film history; to this day actors who strive to create an illusion of spontaneity and emotional depth on camera are working in a 'line' established by their iconic performances. Sometimes, through no fault of their own, they exerted a pernicious influence. As a too-old-looking high-school troublemaker in *Blackboard Jungle* (1955) Vic Morrow offers a hollow, posturing imitation of the 'rebel' style of Brando and Dean.

But the example of the Method, and the lure of the Actors Studio as a place where actors could go for help, could also have a positive impact on outside actors, as in the example of Marilyn Monroe. Groomed for stardom and inevitably typecast by her studio, Twentieth-Century Fox, Monroe was drawn by the promise of the 'new' style of actor training offered at the Actors Studio. Perhaps too eagerly, Strasberg became both surrogate therapist and parent to the troubled actress, but he did help her to hone the talent amply displayed in her early work – her psychotic babysitter in *Don't Bother to Knock* (1952), her smouldering wife in *Niagara* (1953). When she had a good part, as in *Bus Stop* (1956), playing a no-talent chanteuse longing for love and respect, she was deeper and more self-revealing than she had been before.

Clift, Brando and Dean led the way, but American films of the 1950s and early 1960s are distinguished by many examples of luminous Method acting by Studio-trained performers. A small sample: Julie Harris in *The Member of the Wedding* (1952) and *East of Eden* (Kazan said he could never watch her final scene, with Massey, without crying); Kim Stanley in *The Goddess* (1958) and *Seance on a Wet Afternoon* (1964); Geraldine Page in *Summer and Smoke* (1961) and *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1962); Paul Newman in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958) and *Somebody Up There Likes Me* (1956); Ben Gazzara in *The Strange One* (1957) and *Anatomy of a Murder* (1959); Carroll Baker in *Baby Doll* and *Something Wild* (1961).

It is surely no accident that many of these rich performances are in works by major writers: acting of psychological and emotional complexity grows out of and collaborates with writing that has similar qualities. Just as Stanislavski began to evolve his system working on Chekhov, the Method as developed at the Actors Studio coincided with the debut of Tennessee Williams, poet rather than naturalist, a lyrical writer with acute psychological insight. Likewise, the Method is a style of *enhanced* realism. Adler insisted that the kind of realism that she and the other Group teachers were after was a style and not to be confused with life itself: reality, she told students, is what you live; realism is what you do when you transform reality into art. As she maintained, realism is "the greatest, most demanding style of all".

In its earliest and most influential phase, at least until the early 1960s, the Method is an overt, even – almost paradoxically



Shock of the new: Vivien Leigh and Marlon Brando in Elia Kazan's *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951)

—an extroverted display of craft. Early Method actors, like writers in love with writing, often paraded technique—as opposed to star minimalists like Gary Cooper, who never let you catch them acting. The flamboyant and joyful acting by Actors Studio members in many 1950s films formed the basis of what has come to be called the American style. The work was so seductive that it has to a large extent become the international film style—the kind of acting all good film actors strive for.

The films below, with the exception of *East of Eden*, are screening at BFI Southbank, London, as part of the Sight & Sound Deep Focus season *Birth of the Method: The Revolution in American Acting*, which runs from 25 October to 30 November. James Bell explores their contribution to the emergence of the Method revolution in the 50s.

1 The Breaking Point

Michael Curtiz, 1950, starring John Garfield
Michael Curtiz's superb yet overlooked adaptation of Ernest Hemingway's *To Have and Have Not* (released six years after Howard Hawks's Bogart/Bacall version) saw John Garfield on riveting form in his penultimate performance as Harry Morgan, a fishing-boat captain who gets trapped in a smuggling plot while his affections are caught between a good-time-girl (Patricia Neal) and his wife (Phyllis Thaxter).

Garfield was a former member of the 1930s Group Theatre, and one of the few actors associated with it to transfer to movies, when he signed with Warner Bros towards the end of that decade—much to the outrage of some others in the Group, who viewed Hollywood as a poor relation of the stage (Franchot Tone was perhaps the only other Group actor to work regularly in Hollywood). But then Garfield was always a highly independent figure: he often refused the projects assigned to him by Warners, and when his contract expired in 1946 he established his own independent production company.

As a tough, brooding presence in *noirs* such as *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1946), *Body and Soul* (1947) and *Force of Evil* (1948), Garfield anticipated a whole generation of male Method actors. He was famed for playing hard-boiled rebels, but his Harry Morgan is both tough and a conflicted family man, and shows Garfield's range. It's a hauntingly naturalistic portrayal by a pioneering actor.

2 The Men Fred Zinnemann, 1950, starring Marlon Brando **On the Waterfront** Elia Kazan, 1954, starring Marlon Brando, Eva Marie Saint, Karl Malden, Rod Steiger, Lee J. Cobb
Following Marlon Brando's revolutionary stage performance in *A Streetcar Named Desire* in 1947, he made his cinema debut in *The Men*, in which he gives a standard-setting, deeply empathetic performance as a paralysed and embittered WWII veteran who initially rejects the treatment of Everett Sloane's doctor, and the concern of his fiancée (Teresa Wright). Brando spent a month on a paraplegic ward in preparation, and his Method intensity brings an urgency that makes the rest of the cast feel outdated—watching, you can feel fault lines opening in American acting.



Adolescent angst: James Dean in *East of Eden* (1955)

Four years after *The Men* came *On the Waterfront*, perhaps the definitive Method film, with Kazan directing and much of the cast drawn from the ranks of the Actors Studio. The explosive impact of Brando's Terry Malloy, the boxer turned docker and errand boy for corrupt union boss Johnny Friendly (Lee J. Cobb), has hardly dimmed since it was released 60 years ago. Brando's nuanced work eloquently expresses Terry's inner turmoil, explored through his complicated relationships with his older brother

(Rod Steiger), the local priest (Karl Malden) and Edie (Eva Marie Saint, another Method-trained Studio alumnus, who brought great sensitivity and depth to her role, earning her the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress in 1955), the sister of the man he unwittingly lures to his death at the start of the film. Conveyed through great technique, spontaneity and intelligence, it is a touchstone performance felt in all great American screen acting since.



John Garfield in *The Breaking Point* (1950)

3 The Member of the Wedding

Fred Zinnemann, 1952, starring Julie Harris
Reprising her role from a stage production of Carson McCullers's novel for her film debut, the then 27-year-old Julie Harris plays Frankie Addams, an awkward, tomboyish and hyper-imaginative 12-year-old girl who finally wants nothing more than attention from those in her poor Deep South community. If the high volume and bold gestures of Harris's performance can be exhausting, and betray the film's theatrical origins, it's nonetheless a *tour de force* of Method technique, through which Harris achieves an astonishing transformation to portray a troubled child less than half her age.



Marlon Brando in *The Men* (1950)

One of the most idiosyncratic of the new crop of Method-trained actors, Harris alternated stage performances with film and TV work for the rest of her life, arguably with greater balance than fellow female Studio peers such as Kim Stanley and Geraldine Page, both of whom had formidable reputations on the stage, which in Stanley's case was arguably never matched by fitting onscreen roles. Harris then played opposite James Dean in Kazan's *East of Eden* (1955), and was especially memorable as Nell in *The Haunting* (1963). Like many other Studio members, she was also a regular presence in the 'Golden Age' of American live television dramas that ran through the 1950s and did much to build bridges between stage and screen. A fine example of her TV work in this period is *A Wind from the South* (1955), included on the Criterion Collection DVD set 'The Golden Age of Television' alongside other important early Method performances like Rod Steiger in *Marty* (1953), written by Paddy Chayefsky, and Jack Palance in *Requiem for a Heavyweight* (1956).

4 *East of Eden* Elia Kazan, 1955, starring James Dean, Julie Harris

Our first big-screen sighting of James Dean conveys immediately his magnetic, self-possessed onscreen presence, still modern in its strangeness and volatility. Setting the scene in California in 1917, the camera pans up from the seafloor, following a woman in black along a dusty street, to reveal teenager Cal Trask (Dean), crouched on a curb, his limbs drawn inward to his body much as an animal might do for protection. All of a sudden Cal springs to his feet and follows the woman, his movements a mixture of twitchy hesitancy and barely contained energy. Dean's use of the Method, which he studied under Strasberg from 1952, and described as "the best thing that can happen to an actor", was always more physically expressive than verbal – even in dramatic dialogue scenes he typically provokes a visceral reaction through an anguished shout or cry.

The woman is Cal's mother, now a madam at a Monterey bordello – an outcast much like him. Cal tries to reach out to this absent mother, with whom he feels an emotional connection that's lacking in the damaged relationship he has with his father (Raymond Massey) and older brother (Richard Davalos), but present with his brother's fiancée Abra (Julie Harris).

Dean would play the rebellious son again in *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) and *Giant* (1956), and his early death means he didn't get to prove that he had a greater range. But it's often



Palance and Winters in *The Big Knife* (1955)

forgotten that he left behind a prolific number of performances for television, admittedly often in the same troubled teenager vein, as in *Glory in the Flower* (1953) and *The Dark, Dark Hours* (1955), and as an ex-con in *A Long Time Till Dawn* (1953). Whether he could have gone on to reveal new shades to his acting is difficult to say – Kazan doubted it, as he felt Dean relied too heavily on projecting his own confrontational personality, and wasn't as finely trained as Brando. Nonetheless, Dean remains a cornerstone of the onscreen Method and a defiantly singular actor, even as he has inspired countless imitators.

5 *The Big Knife* Robert Aldrich, 1955, starring Jack Palance, Rod Steiger, Shelley Winters, Ida Lupino, Everett Sloane, Wendell Corey Robert Aldrich's indictment of Hollywood is adapted from a play by Clifford Odets that was first performed in 1949 with John Garfield in the central role, and boasts some of the most grandly wrought Method-influenced performances of its era. Jack Palance is emphatically physical as Charles Castle, a Hollywood studio

Julie Harris offers a tour de force of Method technique, achieving an astonishing transformation to portray a girl less than half her age



Julie Harris (right) as 12-year-old Frankie in *The Member of the Wedding* (1952)



Marilyn Monroe in *Bus Stop* (1956)

actor in the Garfield-mould who yearns for more substantial parts and wants out of his contract, yet finds his ambitions blocked by the tyrannical head of the studio, played with typical relish by Method-trained Rod Steiger.

Shelley Winters stands out in a fine supporting cast as Dixie Evans, the flirty starlet with whom Castle is having an affair, while Ida Lupino as Castle's estranged wife provides a fascinating contrast to the Method approach taken by the Studio actors elsewhere.

The film reveals how pronounced the impact of the Method revolution on Hollywood had become by the mid-1950s, as the Method is implied in its very themes and characters, and stands for integrity against the apparently surface entertainments of traditional star performances – much as the raw excitement of rock and roll made old crooners seem staid and contrived.

6 *Bus Stop*

Joshua Logan, 1956, starring Marilyn Monroe As with several female Hollywood stars in the 1950s and 1960s (among them Shelley Winters, Anne Bancroft, Ellen Burstyn and Jane Fonda) Marilyn Monroe found in the Method a refuge from the typecasting she had come to resent. She became a regular at the Actors Studio, and had private lessons with Lee Strasberg – something that divided opinion at the Studio, some recognising in her a real acting talent, 


Carroll Baker and Eli Wallach in *Baby Doll* (1956)

others resentful of the special attention Strasberg gave her. Monroe's portrayal in *Bus Stop* of a saloon singer who yearns to be respected for more than her looks, and who faces the overbearing affections of a naive cowboy (a wincingly misjudged, yet somehow Oscar-nominated performance by Don Murray), is a model of the Method style – an exposing performance drawn from within. The contrast was still more pronounced in *The Prince and the Showgirl* (1957), with Monroe's Method interiority contrasting sharply and compellingly with Laurence Olivier's British stage technique.

7 *Baby Doll* Elia Kazan, 1956, starring Carroll Baker, Karl Malden, Eli Wallach Scandalous in its day, *Baby Doll* sees Elia Kazan wring every sordid drop of jealousy, sleaze and black comedy from Tennessee Williams's hothouse adaptation of his own one-act Southern Gothic play about a grotesque and bizarre love triangle. The three Actors Studio stalwarts at the film's core all deliver hugely enjoyable Method-fuelled performances, with Carroll Baker unforgettable as the seductive but virginal teenager who has married too young; Karl Malden as her lustful, pathetic husband


The Strange One (aka *End as a Man*, 1957)

Archie; and Eli Wallach as Silva, the wily Sicilian businessman intent on seducing her.

Though *Baby Doll* would remain the role for which she was best known, Baker continued to have an interesting career up to her retirement in 2002. She acted alongside James Dean and Elizabeth Taylor in *Giant* (1956), then moved to Italy in 1965 where she appeared in numerous *giallo* and horror films before returning to the US in 1980. One of her most compelling performances was as a rape victim who is taken captive by her would-be rescuer (Ralph Meeker) in *Something Wild* (1961), an independent production by her then-husband Jack Garfein, who was also a key teacher at the Actors Studio.

8 *The Strange One* (aka *End as a Man*) Jack Garfein, 1957, starring Ben Gazzara, George Peppard, Pat Hingle Adapted from a play entitled *End as a Man* by Calder Willingham, and first developed by Jack Garfein and Studio actors (including James Dean) through intense late-night improvisations at the Actors Studio in 1952, Garfein's film is very much an ensemble showpiece for the Method, and one of the clearest onscreen records of the Studio's work in the period. As Garfein has


Anthony Perkins (right) in *Fear Strikes Out* (1957)

written of the rehearsals: "There was no thought of a future commercial production. The aim was to implement what we called the work on an entire play. The work in Studio parlance, meant there would be no pre-conditioned interpretation of the characters. We would have unlimited rehearsals without a set date of presentation – the use of an inordinate amount of improvisations until we found the behavior that truly reflected the psychology of the characters."

The action centres on a group of cadets at a military school, boasting a cast that includes George Peppard and Pat Hingle. But the film is ultimately stolen by the magnetic Ben Gazzara, making his film debut as the cunning, ferociously articulate anti-hero Jocko De Paris, who exerts a bullying reign of terror over his peers. The play suggests that much of Jocko's vengeful bullying stems from repressed homosexuality, something that Garfein had to mute for the screen by cutting three minutes of film owing to the censorial Production Code constraints still in effect in the late 1950s.

As an aside, the film made a great impression on a youthful Morrissey, who writes in his autobiography of the thrilling impact Gazzara's performance had on him.

9 *Edge of the City* Martin Ritt, 1957, starring John Cassavetes, Sidney Poitier, Jack Warden, Ruby Dee Often likened to *On the Waterfront* because of its New York dockside setting and exposure of corruption, Martin Ritt's gritty film revolves around two superb performances from John Cassavetes and Sidney Poitier. Poitier was an Actors Studio member, though it's Cassavetes as a new-to-the-job drifter whose performance sits more obviously in the twitchy Method-style. (Cassavetes was in fact teaching Method acting in New York at the time of shooting.) Early in the film his character antagonises Jack Warden's crooked foreman, and is taken under the wing of Poitier's more experienced porter. The film broke ground in its portrayal of a mixed-race friendship, and in positioning Poitier as a stable role model to his more wayward white friend.

10 *Fear Strikes Out* Robert Mulligan, 1957, starring Anthony Perkins, Karl Malden Based on the memoir by the gifted but troubled Boston Red Sox baseball player Jimmy Piersall, Mulligan's film is at once a sports biopic and an examination of the damaging psychological toll of overbearing parental expectation. Actors Studio


Men at work: Sidney Poitier and John Cassavetes in *Edge of the City* (1957)

member Anthony Perkins portrays Piersall with astonishing sensitivity and control as a vulnerable young man only inches from mental breakdown, desperately seeking approval from his oppressively devoted father (Karl Malden) until eventually his mind can take the strain no more. Perkins's career would, of course, be defined by his portrayal of another, more dangerously unstable young man in Hitchcock's *Psycho* three years later, which, while it ranks among the most iconic of all screen performances, arguably frustrated him by casting an inescapable shadow over his career thereafter, despite diverse performances in films such as Orson Welles's *The Trial* (1962) and Noel Black's *Pretty Poison* (1968).

11 **Somebody Up There Likes Me**

Robert Wise, 1956, starring Paul Newman, Pier Angeli, Sal Mineo

There's a famous photograph taken by Eve Arnold at an Actors Studio class in 1955, and in among the attentive faces there's a figure in the foreground who draws your eye away from everybody else and on to him. It's Paul Newman, of course, and the picture captures the tension between his classic star looks and the committed actor. Early in his career, Newman surely recognised how his looks could limit him to bland roles, and he often offset them by offering abrasive characterisations in films such as *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958) and alongside Geraldine Page in *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1962).

Newman's film breakthrough was in fact relatively slow in coming, his debut role in the sword-and-sandals production *The Silver Chalice* (1954) having been an embarrassing disaster. But alongside stage work, Newman, like Julie Harris and other Studio members, acted regularly in live television dramas in the early and mid-1950s, refining his technique.

One of his most obviously Method-fuelled performances came with his second film, *Somebody Up There Likes Me* (1956). In a role originally intended for James Dean, the famously blue-eyed actor convinces against the odds as street-tough Italian-American boxer Rocky Graziano. Chronicling Graziano's rise from the embattled family life of his youth, via street crime and jail, to eventual redemption in the ring and in life via marriage to Pier Angeli's Norma, Newman's performance provided a model for the committed Method actor – *Raging Bull*-era Robert De Niro among them. His immersive preparations saw him shadow the real Graziano for weeks, picking up his mannerisms, speech and fighting style.

12 **Wild River**

Elia Kazan 1960, starring Montgomery Clift, Lee Remick, Jo Van Fleet, Barbara Loden

After John Garfield, Montgomery Clift was the first of the new generation of Method-trained actors to capture attention in the movies. The introspective vulnerability for which he became famous was detectable in his performance in Fred Zinnemann's *The Search* (1948), and presented a riveting naturalistic counterpoint to one of co-star John Wayne's own finest performances in Howard Hawks's *Red River* (1948), in the process nudging Wayne to nuances



Lord of the ring: Paul Newman as boxer Rocky Graziano in *Somebody Up There Likes Me* (1956)

beyond the 'on-the-horse/off-the-horse' school he personified. But Clift first truly opened the gates with his signature Method performance in George Stevens's *A Place in the Sun* (1951), which alongside Brando's performance in the same year's *A Streetcar Named Desire* provided the spark that ignited the onscreen Method revolution.

Clift's quiet determination and physical hesitancy bring depths to an engrossingly lyrical film, not least in his scenes with Lee Remick

By the time of *Wild River* in 1960, his saintly beauty tarnished by the injuries he had sustained in a car accident, Clift's Method techniques might seem more muted and contained. Yet he still beautifully projects a mournful empathy as a New Deal-era government official sent to move people off an island on the Tennessee river before a new dam submerges everything around them. Elia Kazan originally wanted Brando for the role, but Clift's quiet determination and physical hesitancy bring further depths to an engrossingly lyrical film, not least in the powerful love scenes with the emotionally fragile yet physically assertive Lee Remick. 9



Raw deal: Montgomery Clift and Lee Remick in Elia Kazan's *Wild River* (1960)

FAITH IN THE SYSTEM

Although he only made two films, Jack Garfein, a central figure at the Actors Studio, is finally starting to enjoy the acclaim he deserves

By Clyde Jeavons

In July 2007, the aficionados at the Il Cinema Ritrovato film festival sat down to watch a 1957 black-and-white American feature many of them had never heard of, by a director whose name was equally obscure. I was particularly curious because I recalled, as a teenager, having seen the film on its release, in a double-bill, and remembered it as one of the movies that had a profound effect on my formative critical sense, mainly for its strikingly different acting style: my first conscious encounter with the Method.

The version I had seen was called *End as a Man*: a hothouse melodrama set in a sadistic Southern military academy, about a psychopathic cadet called Jocko De Paris. Bologna's pristine restoration was now titled, rather vividly, *The Strange One*, starring Ben Gazzara in his film debut. Gazzara, who had played the part of Jocko on stage, was a member of the Actors Studio, and what we were watching (*pace* Brando) was the *über*-Method actor of his generation. Gazzara, then 76 years old, had been invited to present *The Strange One* at Bologna. He was asked about the little-known director of the film, Jack Garfein. Had they kept in touch? Gazzara said no, he hadn't heard from him in a long time – he presumed he was dead.

As programme adviser for the Treasures from the Archives section of the BFI's London Film Festival, I selected *The Strange One* for inclusion in that year's festival. Shortly after the programme was announced, the LFF staff received a telephone call from Paris in which, roughly précised, a gruff voice announced: "Hello, my name is Jack Garfein. I hear you're showing my film. Can I come and see it?" Garfein came, presented his film, and talked about Gazzara, the Actors Studio – of which he too had been a member – and the Method, even though it was a term he disliked. He was the same age as Gazzara. He also spoke about another film he had made, which barely anyone was aware of – at least in the UK – called *Something Wild*, a prescient drama from 1961 about rape, which starred two more Studio alumni, Carroll Baker (whom Garfein married) and Ralph Meeker. This was screened in the LFF in 2012, with Garfein again present. Gazzara, meanwhile, had died.

Garfein made only these two feature films – hence his comparative invisibility to cinemagoers over the past 50-odd years. Too punctilious and single-minded to tolerate the exigencies and commercially driven compromises of studio filmmaking, his preference was for stage direction, which he had learned at the Actors Studio – with mentors such as Harold Clurman, Elia Kazan and Lee Strasberg – and he subsequently devoted himself to the theatre and teaching acting, commuting (as he continues to do) between



Trapped: Carroll Baker in *Something Wild* (1961)

New York and Paris. Despite his long absence from film production, however, and thanks partly to the restoration and critical reassessment of his two movies – which have deservedly achieved minor cult status – Garfein has enjoyed late recognition as a visionary filmmaker.

Garfein's enduring career and longevity are all the more remarkable when one considers his backstory. Born a Czech in 1930, the son of a relatively prosperous Jewish timber merchant, he found himself a citizen of the Nazi-supported breakaway puppet state of Slovakia after Hitler's invasion, and thus a prey to persecution and eventual deportation, sanctioned and carried out by the Slovakian government. "First they took a Jew's gold, if any," Garfein later recalled, "then his possessions, then his property, then his identity, until he became a nonperson." Some of his family were sent straight to Auschwitz-Birkenau. He and his mother and sister escaped to Hungary to join his father, only to be caught later when Hungary's Jews were rounded up. At Auschwitz, he survived by lying about his age (face to face with Mengele, no less) and by the selfless actions of others, including his doomed mother. By sheer luck, he survived 11 death camps, until

his relief by the British at Bergen-Belsen in April 1945, when he was 14. His entire immediate family of some 20 souls had been wiped out.

At the age of 15, Garfein was brought to the United States by a distant uncle. He says the only English he could speak was: "British soldiers good. White bread, please." In 1985-86, at the age of 55, he was the subject of a CBS documentary, *A Journey Back*, which even now – amid a flood of Holocaust testimony – stands out as one of the most vivid, raw and moving personal accounts of the concentration camp experience ever put on record. In it, he revisits a snow-covered Auschwitz and describes in painful detail its murderous banality. Later, there is an extraordinary episode in Hamilton, Ontario, in which he encounters the Slovak administrator from his hometown of Bardejov – now a pillar of the immigrant community – who had instigated and supervised the transportation of the local Jewish population "on state orders": essentially, a war criminal. The man "remembers little" and lies about his direct involvement. All Garfein seeks is not revenge, but the truth, hoping to provoke shame and find absolution, neither of which is forthcoming.

In the US, the young Garfein was determined

to be an actor, and after directing and performing in a one-act play at the orphanage where he had been placed, he applied to Erwin Piscator's Dramatic Workshop, which he still regards as America's finest training ground for actors and directors at the time. With help from a couple of influential sponsors, he won two years' scholarship at the Workshop. At 17, he was the youngest in an acting class that included Tony Curtis (then Bernie Schwartz), Rod Steiger and Walter Matthau. Because of his energy on stage and his improvisatory skills, Piscator saw in him a director rather than an actor, much to Garfein's dismay ("Directors to me were failed actors. Directing was a clerical job"). Strasberg, who ran the directing class, agreed with Piscator and persuaded Garfein to make the change.

Strasberg was also Garfein's gateway to the Actors Studio. Strasberg, with Clurman and Cheryl Crawford, had formed the Group Theatre in the early 30s, producing an array of meaningful plays by gifted writers such as Clifford Odets, and attracting some of the most talented actors of that era, some of whom became influential acting teachers: Stella Adler, Sanford Meisner, Robert Lewis. It was also the breeding-ground for future directors and film stars: Kazan began there as a young actor, along with John Garfield and Franchot Tone. Strasberg, a follower of Stanislavski's teachings, was in charge of the Group's acting sessions, but many of the actors disagreed with Strasberg's emotive 'inner-self' approach to the craft of acting and his interpretation of Stanislavski's intentions. There are a number of variations on the famous story of how Adler, a particular sceptic when it came to Strasberg, responded to Strasberg's instruction, during an acting exercise, to cut a lime: "Do you want me to cut it like a real lime, or an imaginary one?" Strasberg walked out, never to return. The Group was dissolved in the late 30s as its leading members were offered profitable Hollywood contracts and international fame.

In 1947, out of the ashes of the Group Theatre, Kazan, Crawford and Robert Lewis formed the Actors Studio. Kazan said its purpose was "to get actors out of the rain": a place where "we, the directors, are guides, there to bring out the best in the actors"; where actors could try things out and discover their potential without pressure from outside. "Here," says Garfein, "you had the most experienced actors inspired by talented newcomers, and they in turn by the experienced actors' perceptiveness – an amazing concept in the preparation of the art." One of the problems was Strasberg, who, as Kazan became busy directing films and Broadway productions, was invited in with the proviso that he was not to attempt his private or 'emotional' exercises, but simply to moderate the acting sessions.

Nonetheless, in 1951 Strasberg became a director of the Studio and is still perceived as its main proponent and mentor – perhaps even a guru – to the many brilliant actors who "came out of the rain", despite their ambivalence towards his teaching methods. Garfein, for his part, had applied to join the Actors Studio via the American Theater Wing, as part of a directors' training scheme that favoured veterans of the Korean War, sponsored by the GI Bill. Garfein announced



Water torture: Ben Gazzara (centre) and Paul E. Richards in *The Strange One* (aka *End as a Man*, 1957)

himself as a 'veteran' of Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen, a shock tactic which worked: he was accepted. In fact, he was the only successful candidate, but he had first to impress Strasberg with demonstrations of his directing skills. This he did with a partial adaptation of Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, followed by a New York production of *The Lady of the Camellias*. These earned Garfein a year's probation at the Studio, during which time he had to direct a play under Studio conditions. The outcome was a critically acclaimed stage adaptation of *End as a Man*, with Gazzara in the lead role, as a result of which Garfein was the first director to be voted in as a lifetime member of the Studio; up to that point, only actors could become life members.

At the age of 22, Garfein had achieved one of his ambitions: to be part of the Actors Studio. "The Studio was the only place to be in 1950," he is quoted as saying in Foster Hirsch's definitive book, *A Method to Their Madness: The History of the Actors Studio* (its title echoing Robert Lewis's earlier account, *Method or Madness*, which is said to have given the Studio's acting style its keyword: as mentioned, Garfein rejects the term as too glib, preferring Stanislavski's 'System', his antidote to 'inspiration', which supposedly drove former great

Garfein rejects the term 'Method' as too glib, preferring Stanislavski's 'System', his antidote to the idea of 'inspiration'



Jack Garfein: 'Acting is life and life is acting'

actors such as Edmund Kean and Eleonora Duse). "The best of the Broadway people were there, and being there meant a certain kind of recognition. The actors had an ease and humanity, and twice each week they illuminated something in [a] play which hadn't been touched before. I felt these people had gotten close to the spirit of Stanislavski's book, *An Actor Prepares*, which had been the original spark for me. To me, acting is life and life is acting, which is what I try to teach."

Garfein was as ambivalent about Strasberg as his contemporaries at the Studio. They clashed frequently over teaching and directing methodology. Strasberg's genius, he says, was reflected in his ability to recognise actors' innate talent and their potential, which they themselves were unaware of, be they Dean or Brando. He had the astonishing ability to define how through their craft actors were able to reveal the inner meaning of a character, thereby illuminating the play. As Proust said, actors are able to create a masterpiece within a masterpiece – that is, a performance within a play. Garfein gives, as a parallel example, his idol Laurence Olivier's *tour de force* as Archie Rice in John Osborne's *The Entertainer*. Strasberg gave actors confidence, morale and a sense of their own proper importance. But the process by which he strove to achieve practical results (his introspective 'exercises'), Garfein felt was entirely misguided, bordering on the ignorant. He also considered Strasberg's obvious attraction to celebrity and fame, which drew the likes of Marilyn Monroe to the Studio, a betrayal of the Studio ethos.

After he had tested the waters of film direction and found them wanting, Garfein embarked on a successful career as a theatre director, earning acclaim for his productions of Seán O'Casey's *The Shadow of a Gunman* and the plays of Arthur Miller and Samuel Beckett. In 1966, he founded (with Paul Newman) a branch of the Actors Studio in Los Angeles, and today he continues to teach Method acting and directing in Paris, New York and London; his book on the subject, *Life and Acting*, appeared in 2010. 

i Jack Garfein will talk about his life and work with Clyde Jeavons at BFI Southbank, London, on 27 November

PROFILE

NO ILLUSIONS, NO HOPE

Often recalled only for his spoiled-youth drama *Crazed Fruit*, Nakahira Ko arguably created Japan's most eclectic – and downbeat – *œuvre*

By Olaf Möller

Nakahira Ko (1926-78) is one of those cases: a director whose name is mentioned in every slightly more detailed overview of Japanese film history, always alongside the same title: *Crazed Fruit* (*Kurutta kajitsu*, 1956). His first work to hit local screens, it got rave comments from the likes of Oshima Nagisa and François Truffaut, who both praised it as an avatar of the inevitable change to come. Twelve years on, he would remake the film in Hong Kong for Shaw Brothers as *Summer Heat* (*Kuang lian shi*, 1968), when the crown colony was in turmoil and the mandarins of Mandarin cinema were trying to provide explanations. Nakahira was then at the end of his line: an alcoholic in exile.

"And this is it? Aimlessly killing time?" wonders one of the economic-miracle youngsters just a few minutes in to *Crazed Fruit*. Indeed,

that's what the film is about: how a bunch of more or less spoiled brats spend their summer water-skiing, dancing in nifty nightclubs and making out on the beach, all ending in jealousy and fratricide. *Crazed Fruit* wasn't the first of what came to be known as *taiyozoku eiga* ('sun-tribe movies'): a name coined after the first example of that particular sub-sub-genre, Furukawa Takumi's *Season of the Sun* (*Taiyo no kisetsu*, 1956). Both were based on novels by sometime Mishima protégé Ishihara Shintaro (now better known as a rabid right-wing politician and too-long-serving governor of Tokyo prefecture). Times were fast back then, mods and fads came and went quickly; in fact, they were so fast that, per legend, *Crazed Fruit* went into production not only without a finished script but even before Ishihara had finished his novel. It's curious to note that the youngsters of *Crazed Fruit* already disdainfully call people *taiyozoku*; also that the speedboat used in the end as a murder weapon is named *Sun-Season*. Shooting hard and fast on the Shonan coast as well as in the studio became *Crazed Fruit*: the occasional back and forth between crude back projections and sensual seaside vistas make for a fittingly scarred look.

The difference between Nakahira's take on the *taiyozoku* and that of other films made in the same vein before and after is a painfully clear and present sense of inexplicable loss – but what? No explanations, no justifications. The characters only know that they're doomed.

And that's all there is to say about Nakahira Ko, supposedly.

Now, cinema has certainly seen its fair share of one-hit wonders, but there's something about the way Nakahira's career is commonly written down, if not dismissed outright, in Japanese as well as in the very few foreign commentaries on him, that gives cause for some pause. There's a recurring claim that he failed to live up to his early promise, which sounds ridiculous after watching most of his *œuvre*. Nakahira made major works all through his dozen-plus years with the production company Nikkatsu, where the vast

Pop art at its most brutally vulgar suited 60s Nakahira: the garish colours, the camp love for travesty, the gleeful derisiveness



Sun worship: *Crazed Fruit* (*Kurutta kajitsu*, 1956) was an early entry in the 'sun-tribe' cycle of films about the children of Japan's post-war 'economic miracle'

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majority of his films were shot, in a variety of genres including youth movies, crime movies, comedies, melodramas and erotica, characterised by a remarkable penchant for stories about independent-minded, sexually assertive women. The few films he produced independently during the 70s, including *A Soul to Devil* (*Yami no naka no chimimoryo*, 1971), which played in Competition at Cannes, are decidedly of serious merit too.

Crazed Fruit actually looks less impressive than the myth would have it once one has seen *Summer Storm* (*Natsu no arashi*, 1956), *But the Flesh Is Weak* (*Bitoku no yoromeki*, 1957), *A Secret Rendezvous* (*Mikkai*, 1959), *A Town Not on the Map* (*Chizu no nai machi*, 1960) – or, to up the ante a bit, his complete 1964 output, comprising *Only on Mondays* (*Getsuyobi no yuka*), *The Hunter's Diary* (*Ryōjin nikki*), *Flora on the Sand* (*Suna no ue no shokubutsugun*) and *Whirlpool of Flesh* (*Onna no uzu to fuchi to nagare*). And these are all more serious-minded, aesthetically offbeat works that don't even hint at Nakahira's intelligent and daring approach to more studio-friendly genre propositions, as witnessed by *Milkman Frankie* (*Gyūnyūya Frankie*, 1956), *That Guy and I* (*Aitsu to watashi*, 1961), *Danger's Where the Money Is!* (*Abunai koto nara zeni ni naru*, 1962) or *The Black Gambler: Devil's Left Hand* (*Kuroi tobakushi: Akuma no hidarite*, 1966). Lots of titles for a guy whose glory purportedly consists of one major work.

The characteristics of Nakahira's outstanding works, a programme of which will be touring Germany until next year, are not fundamentally different from those of other, more widely lauded directors of the same period, such as Masumura Yasuzo, Suzuki Seijun or Okamoto Kihachi: a dynamic sense of storytelling; edgy, forceful visual compositions; a passion for experimentation; a will to go beyond the limits of good taste as well as the politically opportune. These aren't all found in every film – Nakahira could switch aesthetics from project to project, following a madcap crime-flick spoof like *Danger's Where the Money Is!* with a more sober mix of youth melodrama and yakuza film like *Mud-Spattered Purity* (*Dorodarake no junjo*, 1963), for instance. It's also telling how smoothly he adapted to the Shaw look when he went to Hong Kong, just as some of his Nikkatsu-films almost ooze that studio's particular aroma of *mukokuseki* – a borderless, transnational quality; a fantasy of the International. (Nowhere else in Japan could films like *The Black Gambler* or 1961's *The Arab Storm* – *Arab no arashi* – have been made.)

One never really knew what to expect from him; and looking at the cynically abrasive tone of certain later comedies (the shameless goofiness of *The Black Gambler* is quite impressive), one could never be sure whether he was serious about anything. Pop art at its most brutally vulgar suited 60s Nakahira: the garish colours, the camp love of travesty, the gleeful derisiveness and permissiveness, the worship of surfaces. *Danger's Where the Money Is!*, *The Black Gambler* and *To Rogues There Are No Borders* (*Yaro no kokkyo wa nai*, 1965), remade the following year for Shaw as *Interpol* (*Teijing 009*), sport in varying degrees that grimly debonair attitude. Then again, *Mud-Spattered Purity* and *Modern Children* (*Gendaikko*, 1963) show a very real care for the struggle of the downtrodden lower classes, and a remarkable



Melodramatic death trip: *Summer Storm* (*Natsu no arashi*, 1956)

eye for contemporary living conditions, the way cities looked at their most ordinary; in all this, they hark back to Nakahira's real début, *The Pursued Man* (*Nerawareta otoko*, 1956), shot before but released after *Crazed Fruit*. With *Bright Sea* (*Hikaru umi*, 1963), he even realised an epic about his era's mores and illusions, class contradictions and tensions, in the guise of a good-natured if sometimes disturbingly dark youth movie.

Nakahira never developed anything like an artistic trademark, never systematically flaunted any obvious signs of ambition: ideas like the use of brief colour shots of painting to crack the ice of *Flora on the Sand*'s frosty monochrome images seem to happen impulsively. Meanwhile, his work with close-ups and ellipses – his fascination for fragmentations of all kinds – remains inconsistent. It seems easier to sum up all he neglected to do or be. Whatever one thinks makes a director great and important, Nakahira isn't – but probably could have been if only he were interested in the kinds of glories and rewards that come with conforming to expectations. Maybe he was. Maybe he had some hopes for fame and fortune. Maybe it's really Nikkatsu's fault for not properly backing him, handing him solely second-rate material, as one too often reads – which is another cheap argument, for few and far between are the directors whose

careers were handed to them on a golden platter, while many are the masters who make silk purses of sows' ears. Maybe it was the alcohol.

Maybe somebody who creates works like *Summer Storm* simply couldn't care less. *Summer Storm* can be looked at as a female, much more outspoken pendant to *Crazed Fruit*. Teacher Ryoko, the protagonist, makes no secret of her disgust with life. In her voiceover, she portrays herself as someone in constant disguise. Her family she finds revolting, her handicapped students worthy of little more than disdain, save for one boy who always misbehaves so that she simply has to spank him, which she does, with relish. She has a secret love, Keiji, whom she met but once for a single night, and who finds human existence even more repulsive than she does. And now this very guy pops up at her family's house as her sister's fiancé. Things haven't changed between them: the despair and self-loathing, their particular kind of love, is still there. The parallels with *Crazed Fruit* are intriguing, beginning with the way both films are framed: *Crazed Fruit* opens with a shot of a speedboat's wake, the sinister implications of which become clear only at the end; *Summer Storm* opens with Ryoko shouting at the sea in turmoil ("How unfair!"), followed by a shot of her running towards certain death by drowning, but also towards you, in another brief intimation of the story's conclusion. The difference between these two book-ended narratives is that Ryoko's and Keiji's morbid sensibility colours almost every scene following their reunification, turning *Summer Storm* into a melodramatic death trip. Ryoko is less the exception than the rule among Nakahira's women: in contrast to the rowdy, rambunctious, life-affirming lustiness of, say, Masumura's women, Nakahira's might find satisfaction in the pleasures of the flesh but rarely fulfilment or happiness.

It's probably Nakahira's profound unhappiness, emotional brutality and morose coolness that made film history keep him at arm's length. ☹



Bright Sea (*Hikaru umi*, 1963)

MUSIC THAT PLAYS IN THE DARK

To mark the 20th anniversary of *Sátántangó*'s release, we revisit Hungarian composer Mihály Víg's haunting scores for Béla Tarr

By Jonathan Romney

When Hungarian director Béla Tarr announced that he would no longer make films after his melancholic summum *The Turin Horse* (2011), admirers of his cinema might justifiably have wondered whether that also meant hearing no more music by his regular composer Mihály Víg. In fact, Víg continues to be active in cinema. His most recent soundtrack credit, according to IMDb, is for a 2013 Turkish film, Alphan Eseli's *The Long Way Home*, and according to Ronnie Scheib, reviewing it in *Variety* at last year's Montreal Film Festival, "the haunting score... devastates". I haven't seen the film but I can well believe it. Haunting – in the properly unearthly sense of the word – and devastation are certainly words that come to mind when you think of Víg's scores for Tarr's work. Víg may have been little heard outside that context, but his is one of the most singular soundtrack voices in European cinema.

Born in 1957, Víg has a background in Hungarian rock, in the bands Trabant in the early 80s and Balaton, which appears to have been running concurrently right up to the present day. Trabant was apparently a loose underground collective; according to a wonderfully vague Wikipedia entry, "Their texts are best described by the words enigmatic, intertextual, grotesque and absurd; their musical style does not fall into any of the known musical categories." As for Balaton, they can apparently be categorised without too much strain, judging from recent live clips on YouTube, with Víg on guitar and vocals performing low-slung, affable but unexceptional blues-rock.

By contrast, Víg's scores for Tarr are intensely idiosyncratic. His first was for *Almanac of Fall* (1983), a claustrophobic chamber drama with stylised expressionist lighting. The score offers a range of styles: a very slow, solemn piano theme; a lugubrious waltz with warped, wheezy synthesiser; and, most distinctively, a piece in which two electric guitars dialogue in quiet dissonance, establishing a tone of ironic detachment from what's happening on screen, as a man argues on the phone with a creditor.

Damnation (1988) – the film that inaugurates



Forced jollity: as well as composing the film's manic folk dance, Víg plays Irimiás (right) in *Sátántangó*

the familiar Tarr style of long takes in black and white – goes further in establishing Víg's talent for setting melancholic mood, as well as his skill at pastiche. There's a rock and roll interlude at a small town dance, but it's knowingly *bad* rock and roll, evoking the sound of an energetic but clunky and jaded local band; however, while the rhythm is flat and mechanical, it offsets the energetic soloing of a saxophone, on the cusp of jazz and folk as it might be in a Balkan wedding band. In a key sequence, set in a nightspot of stygian glumness appropriately named the Titanic Bar, a weary *chanteuse* sings a hyper-lugubrious torch song in a mode that sets Dietrichian ennui to the blowsy piano arpeggios of 50s American pop: "It won't be good/ Ever again/ Never more," read the subtitles as she sings, almost motionless and looking fit to collapse. The mood suggests a monochrome Eastern Europe response to *Blue Velvet*, topped by a disreputably greasy saxophone solo at the end. Yet the music is deceptive: we briefly see a drummer tapping away in the background but the beat we hear is manifestly a clicking rhythm-box preset; and, throughout, the drums, the repetitive piano and the voice keep slipping subtly but disorientingly out of sync, as if the song

There's an abstract dimension to Víg's scores – in 'Sátántangó' it's the ominous recurring sound of fantasmal distant bells

were fated to wear itself down to nothingness before it could possibly start to cohere.

That same out-of-kilter quality recurs in the manic folk dance that comes round several times in *Sátántangó* (1994), a film in which the rakishly bearded and long-haired Víg also has a significant acting role as Irimiás, the sinister, charismatic harbinger of perdition. The dance theme – played on accordion, with clattering, vestigial percussion – comes to the foreground in the scene in which the film's drunken villagers dance wildly and stumblingly in the local tavern. The theme goes round and round, consistently frantic, neither pausing nor reaching resolution at any point: again, it threatens to burn out before it ends. This piece is heard at different points in the film's layering of narrative sequences, the same event repeated from varying perspectives, the music's forced jollity ironically underpinning the world's – and the foolish dancers' – indifference



Almanac of Fall (1983)



Damnation (1988)



The Man from London (2007)

to the fate of the young girl looking in through the window from out in the rainy night.

There's also a more abstract dimension to Vig's scores: the creation of atmospherics, sometimes in the form of effects that merge with the overall sound design. In *Damnation*, it is the looming industrial hum that runs through the first section of the film, accompanying the sight of the coal trucks that trundle through the sky. In *Sátántangó*, it's the ominous recurring sound of fantasmal distant bells. And in *The Turin Horse*, it comes in a form that is virtually subliminal: an eerie four-note motif almost, but not quite, hidden in the racket of the wind that blows forbiddingly throughout the film.

Vig's music, even when he highlights (as in *Damnation*'s rhythm click) the manifestly synthetic nature of a particular piece, always displays a realism of its own, an organic quality: the accentuated wheeze of a saxophone, the scrape of bowed string reminds us that these are real instruments that we're hearing, and sometimes suggests that they're being played by human beings who might well be on the edge of physical or emotional collapse. Such passages can veer quite close to the border of gothic horror scoring – as in the dense, foghorn-like ambience that provides the overture to *The Man from London* (2007) – but in these sequences Vig's themes transcend the generic through their repetitive intensity and the sheer weight that he gives his sounds. The creaking low strings of *The Turin Horse* – in the long opening scene that shows us the doomed farmer driving his wagon home – suggest laboriousness, decrepitude, cosmic wheels that might roll on pitilessly for eternity (even through the enforced stasis that emerges as the film's theme). Again, as in *Sátántangó*'s accordion dance, the force of entropy or decay seems already embodied in the music; it always sounds as if the instruments were only managing with heavy effort to stay in sync and in tune. Later in the film, the same music is pared down to its underlying organ theme (it's because of the organ that, if this music resembles any style of minimalism, it's the minimalism of Terry Riley).

The blackly minor-key apocalypse that ends *The Turin Horse* was a valedictory note for Tarr, who so far has been true to his word and stayed away from directing. But if it's possible to imagine such a film containing a note of hope, it perhaps lies in this: at the end of *The Turin Horse*, the light goes out, seemingly in the entire universe. On screen, everything turns to blackness – and yet, in the dark, Vig's music goes on playing. 📺



The Turin Horse (2011)

PRIMAL SCREEN THE WORLD OF SILENT CINEMA

A strand in this year's BFI London Film Festival showcases several bold contemporary takes on World War I



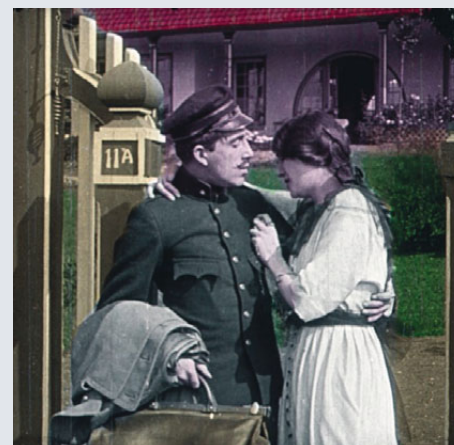
By Bryony Dixon

One thing is certain: the centenary of World War I will not be over by Christmas. We are in it for the long haul and that is as it should be. It allows us time and space, rare in today's media environment, to engage with the detail and complexity of this great watershed of world history. Early fears that the story of the war was overfamiliar, its narratives excessively reduced and concentrated down the years, proved unfounded: unfolding now are a wealth of new stories and discoveries. After some head-scratching among national institutions planning their centenary projects (the BFI among them) as to which of so many centenaries between 2014-18 to mark, it became obvious that we should commemorate all of it. And so it seems we will live through the events of 100 years ago almost day by day, with the strange emotional tug that centenaries inspire. This is not overkill, as every family in the land must have some discoverable connection to events of the war; we are all affected as individuals and as a nation. The perspective is a strange one: although we can't un-know the outcome of events as we try to put ourselves in the shoes of our forebears, there is value in seeing, as far as we can, the view from 100 years ago. Film, of course, is particularly useful in this regard, offering us images shot at the time for us to see for ourselves (with the usual provisos about censorship, contemporary filmmaking practices and so on) – and so to mark the centenary of the early days of the war, this year's 'Treasures' strand at the BFI London Film Festival features a remarkable trio of war-related restorations that reflect a range of perspectives on the conflict.

The first is a Belgian fiction film, *Damn the War!* (*Maudite soit la guerre*), made by French director Alfred Machin – a conventional enough drama of flying-school friends set against each other in wartime, loved by a girl at home as brother and lover respectively. Delicate stencil colouring, vignette framing and gestural acting evoke the tinted sentimental postcards of the war, but new to the brother-against-brother genre are such terrifyingly novel methods of warfare as aerial bombardment, made vivid by startling red tinting for the conflagration. Although the protagonists' nationalities are not mentioned, it is obvious that the girl and her brother are Belgian and the lover is German. Beautiful as it is, the film would be less remarkable had it not been made and released in 1914, a few months before Germany invaded Belgium for real.

Second is a film that was begun almost as soon as the guns had stopped firing

We can't un-know the outcome, but there is value in seeing the view from 100 years ago



Friends become enemies: *Damn the War!*

in 1918. *Airship over the Battlefields* (*En dirigeable sur les champs de bataille*) is a film of record, intended to show the devastation of the Western Front by the simple but brilliant device of floating across the lines of trenches and ruined towns in an airship. It makes no comment apart from an occasional intertitle to indicate where we are: the names loaded with terrible significance include Ypres, Arras, Vimy Ridge. To be granted this God's-eye view of that cratered, ruined landscape, with its zigzag trenches stretching from the English Channel to Switzerland, without the dead weight of a century of history and opinion, is a profound experience. The effect is very raw, like a visual equivalent of the deafness following exposure to loud noise; words are unnecessary here.

Our third film was made almost a decade later, when immediate personal grief might have begun to lessen but national mourning was still very current. *The Battles of Coronel and Falkland Islands* was released on Armistice Day in 1927 and commemorates two significant sea battles from the start of the war. The first, off Coronel in Chile, was the British navy's biggest defeat in a century, involving the loss of 1,570 men; it could have been disastrous for British morale as hopes of a speedy end faded in the autumn of 1914. This film, like *Airship...* is one for the record, complete accuracy being the primary goal of director Walter Summers, himself a decorated veteran (he led the 'over the top' action on which part of *Journey's End* was based). The film was scrupulously fair about the enemy, reflecting the new desire for reconciliation in the 1920s, but also expressed attitudes taken from accounts of 1914, such as the compassion of the ordinary sailor (on both sides) in rescuing their comrades from the water when battle ceased. All three films in their way are powerful anti-war statements. 📺



Damn the War!, *Airship over the Battlefields* and *The Battles of Coronel and Falkland Islands* will screen as part of the BFI London Film Festival (October 8-19). *The Battles of Coronel* is released in UK cinemas on 17 October

ANARCHY IN THE UK

Adam Kossoff's documentary *The Anarchist Rabbi* shines a light on a notable figure in Britain's newly resonant legacy of insurrectionism

By Sukhdev Sandhu

Rudolf Rocker is rarely talked about in radical circles these days. His name most likely conjures up images of 1970s Euro punksploitation barkers. In the early decades of the last century, though, this German-born bookbinder-turned-anarcho-syndicalist, who spent part of his adolescence in an orphanage, was a widely celebrated insurrectionist. He had moved to London's East End in the 1890s and found a spiritual and political berth in that working-class Jewish area. He edited Yiddish newspapers, organised for garment trade unions and theorised and campaigned for anarchism.

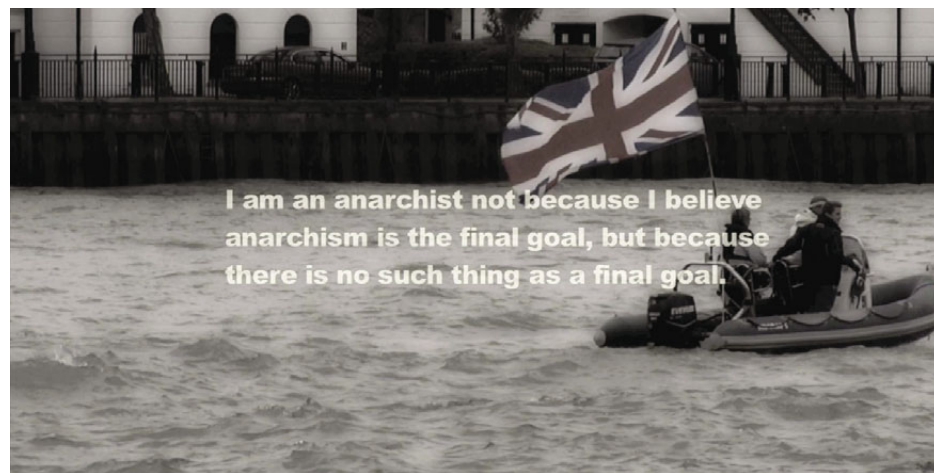
Interned as an enemy alien during World War I, he spent the following years lecturing across mainland Europe before settling in an anarchist commune in upstate New York, where he wrote enduringly important books on the history of American libertarianism. When he died in 1958, Albert Einstein and Thomas Mann paid tribute. Not just a key figure in the pantheon of seditious London, he's also a valuable counterweight to Jonathan Rosenbaum's belief, articulated in an essay on Luc Moullet, that "In

Europe, unlike America, anarchy is nearly always assumed to have right-wing connotations".

The Anarchist Rabbi, by English filmmaker Adam Kossoff, is a re-examination of Rocker's life that is shrouded in ghosts. It begins with a line from Derrida – "If he loves justice at least the scholar of the future... should learn it from the ghost" – that not only draws on the French philosopher's notions of hauntology but establishes Rocker as a spectral figure capable of weighing heavily on and catalysing the present era. The London it evokes was, according to the narration (voiced by Stepney-born Steven Berkoff), "a clearing house for the Jewish revolutionary movement"; revisiting the sites of community halls and educational halls, lingering in their leftist auras, Kossoff contrasts a culture of refusenik resistance with a present day in which "the city has become nothing but a war machine for the conquest of the people that it belongs to".

Kossoff's film appears at a moment of renewed interest in both the legacies and possible futures of anarchist thought. Rogue anthropologist David Graeber scored an unlikely bestseller with *Debt* (2011); Carissa Honeywell's study *A British*

To those weaned on agit-prop jeremiads, the film may seem deceptively becalmed, more mordant than murderous



Ghosts at large: *The Anarchist Rabbi* reveals Rudolf Rocker as a figure able to catalyse the present

Anarchist Tradition (2011) traced a submerged genealogy of Anglo counterculturalism; Alexander Oey's film *There Is No Authority But Yourself* (2006) celebrated the dissidence of anarcho-punk band Crass; Mike Dibb, director of the pivotal *Ways of Seeing* television series, staged a long conversation between revered English anarchist Colin Ward and nature writer Roger Deakin entitled *Personally Speaking* (2009); Huw Wahl has just released a documentary portrait of Herbert Read, *To Hell with Culture*, named after a controversial book by that writer, a co-founder of London's Institute of Contemporary Arts.

The reasons for this critical reappraisal of anarchism can only be speculated upon. Perhaps it's the trickle-down effect of Hardt and Negri's *Empire* (2001), which talked up the potency of new forms of revolutionary collectivism. Or perhaps it's triggered by the art gallery and moving-image sector's continuing search for historical junctures and groupings that spoke the language of futurity. Maybe it's a yearning for alternative designs for living by those faced with austere cultural landscapes.

It's possible that some audiences might imagine anarchist cinema to look like the filmic equivalent of *Sniffin' Glue* fanzine – a messily cut-and-pasted collage that prized in-yer-face confrontation over poised meditation. Kossoff, however, hews closer to ideas he explored in his doctoral dissertation, *On Terra Firma: Space, Place and the Moving Image* (2008), in which he set out "to challenge the vogue for immersion and the drive for the cinematic model (spectacle, narrative and transparency) in current fine art practice."

The most palpable influence in *The Anarchist Rabbi* – discernible in the use of a fixed camera, an interest in the kinds of memory destruction unleashed in modern cities by international finance and a meanderingly meditative screenplay that blurs the line between fictive and critical – is that of Patrick Keiller. There is rage here, but to those weaned on agit-prop jeremiads, the film may seem deceptively becalmed, more mordant than murderous.

The film also draws attention to Kossoff's increasingly significant body of film-essay work. Though he has worked in television – he made the 1987 Channel 4 archive documentary *Eastenders Against the Grain* – in recent years, partly inspired by the writings of Walter Benjamin, he has returned time and time again to the themes of memory and modernity, 20th-century ruinationalism, the relationship between local spaces and internationalist currents. *Not Our Darkness* (2009) was a resonant inquiry into the redevelopment of the Gdańsk shipyard, home of Poland's Solidarity movement in the early 1980s; *Moscow Diary* (2011), shot entirely on a mobile phone, retraces a 1926 trip to the city that Benjamin took in order to woo a Latvian communist named Asja Lacis; *Made in Wolverhampton* (2013) was a simultaneously whimsical and searching portrait of the Midlands city and its almost-occult connections to Havana. In their different ways, all these films (available through LUX) are seances that seek to conjure up what *The Anarchist Rabbi* laments are "images and ideas we no longer have access to".

THE PILGRIM'S WAY

Once considered the equal of Brakhage and Anger, Gregory J. Markopoulos's exquisite films are finally being rediscovered

By James Boaden

Andy Warhol is Poseidon in scuba gear, rowing back and forth on an exercise bike in a wave of powder-blue polythene. Taylor Mead is a sprite, his gurning grin emerging from beneath streaming ribbons in the boughs of a tree. Tally Brown is a plus-size Venus, Gerard Malanga a gilded Ganymede, Jack Smith a sad-sack Orpheus. This cast is assembled from some of the shining lights of the American underground cinema of the 1960s – the superstars of films by Warhol, Smith and Ron Rice. Gregory J. Markopoulos's epic film *The Illiac Passion* (1967) manages to turn these performers, known as part of a world of trash and kitsch, into something supremely elegant. At the time of that film's release, Markopoulos was considered one of the foremost American experimental filmmakers, the peer of Stan Brakhage and Kenneth Anger, yet today he is considerably less well known. In the late 1960s, he moved permanently to Europe and withdrew his work from distribution, thereby disappearing from view for all but those most devoted to his work. He continued to make films until his death in 1992, but none were shown publicly or even printed from the original footage during his lifetime.

Markopoulos was drawn to myth throughout his career, constantly pushing beyond the fashions and fads of his moment to draw on ideas that seemed to him eternal. While he claimed *The Illiac Passion* was drawn from Aeschylus's tragedy *Prometheus Bound*, the film presents an entire pantheon of ancient myth, mixing one strand of imagery with another through superimposition, like the threads of a vast tapestry. A taste for the epic marked Markopoulos's filmmaking from the beginning: his earliest success came with the 1947-48 trilogy of films titled collectively *Du sang, de la volupté et de la mort* (*Of Blood, Pleasure and Death*), which drew on Greek myth and Plato's dialogues. His final film cycle, *Eniaios*, draws together much of the material he shot across a lifetime into 167 reels of film – from which more than 30 hours have been preserved and screened so far – reflecting a commitment to thinking on a monumental scale.

Much of the elegance of Markopoulos's work comes from the way it manages to entwine a sense of the epic with a fastidious attention to detail. In Jonas Mekas's diary film *Walden* (1969), Markopoulos is seen setting up his camera to shoot part of his film *Galaxie* (1966), a series of portraits of New York's cultural intelligentsia. Mekas captures the neat lines of Markopoulos's sharply pressed shirt and thin black tie as his hands deftly adjust the calibration of the Bolex camera that sits perched on a gleaming tripod; the whole scene is contrasted with the wild movement of Mekas's own handheld camera, which produces the sweeping, cursive blurs and flashes characteristic of much experimental cinema of the time. Like Mekas, Markopoulos was



Elegant slumming: Warhol was among the underground icons who took roles in 1967's *The Illiac Passion*

Markopoulos's attention to detail – particularly his desire to control screening conditions – led to his disappearance from the scene

known for his frequent use of single-frame images in his work. While for Mekas these fleeting images were serendipitous visions of life captured on the fly, for Markopoulos they were like jewels set into the flow of the film. This precision would seem clinical if Markopoulos was not also one of the most sumptuous colourists of the American avant garde, able through meticulously planned in-camera superimposition to blend shades and tones in unexpected ways. The film *Ming Green*

(1966), which records one of the apartments Markopoulos lived in and decorated in New York City, shows that this sense of colour and style was as present in his life as it was in his films.

The close attention to detail in Markopoulos's work is ultimately what led to his disappearance from the American underground. He was ambivalent about the main screening opportunities for his work, as experimental film was either shown on scratched prints to reluctant students on dim projectors or as part of a fashionable and newly commercial underground scene that he did not identify with. Markopoulos – like many artists in film and video today – wanted to be able to control the screening conditions for his work and to make sure his audience were true initiates of the vision he was bringing into the world. He and his partner, the filmmaker Robert Beavers, envisioned an idyllic setting where their work could be seen in what they saw as optimal conditions. For 30 years Markopoulos was transfixed by a vision of the Temenos, an ideal place in which the pair's films could be screened and archived. They chose a site near Lyssarea in the Peloponnese in Greece and in the early 1980s held a number of screenings there; Beavers revived these screenings in 2004 after Markopoulos's death and it is there that the newly printed films of *Eniaios* have been seen for the first time.

Mark Webber has edited a volume of Markopoulos's writings whose span reaches from his earliest thinking about film form to his final visionary statements on the future shape of the Temenos. The book is as elegantly produced as its subject matter and will no doubt produce new pilgrims eager to head off to experience the Temenos themselves. **S**

i **Film as Film: The Collected Writings of Gregory J. Markopoulos is published by The Visible Press. A Markopoulos programme screens at London's Tate Modern on 31 October**



Jasper Johns in 1966's *Galaxie*

SCI-FI

DAYS OF FEAR AND WONDER

AN OUT OF THIS WORLD SEASON
OF FILMS AND EVENTS
AT VENUES ACROSS THE UK
OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2014

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Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior
at T13 Skatepark
18 October

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Solaris, Stepford Wives and
Weird Science
5–7 December

CORNWALL – Eden Project
Silent Running with soundscapes by
members of Portishead and Goldfrapp
26 October

SHEFFIELD – Showroom Cinema
Celluloid Screams all-nighter
24–26 October

LONDON – Various Locations
Afrofuturism movies screened
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Reviews



72 **Effie Gray**

The rich, dark tones of Victorian interiors have rarely seemed as suffocatingly oppressive as in this subtly effective dramatisation of the ill-fated marriage between leading art critic John Ruskin and his youthful bride



62 Films of the month



68 Films



96 Home Cinema



104 Books

Gone Girl

USA 2014

Director: David Fincher

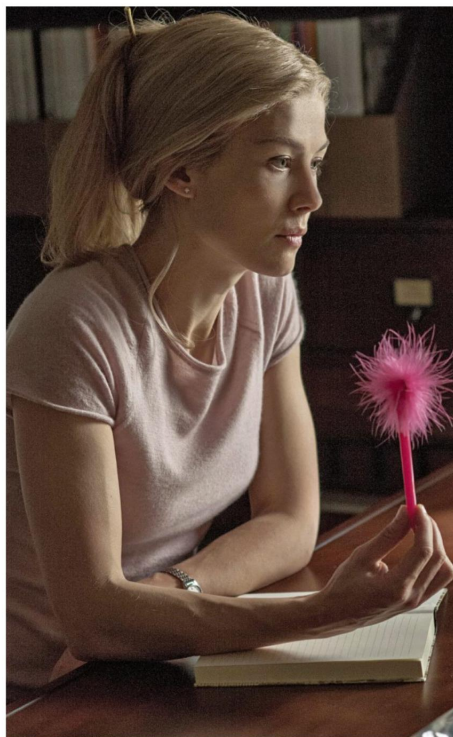
Reviewed by Nick James

Spoiler alert: this review reveals a plot twist

Ever more reliant on pre-existing texts but ever more fearful of marketing difficulty, films in Hollywood's shrinking middle-budget arena must feed on what we used to call the airport novel. Gillian Flynn's huge bestseller *Gone Girl* is a meticulously wrought page-turner of breathless forward momentum structured around the opening moment when its female lead, Amy Elliott Dunne, vanishes from her husband Nick Dunne's life, seemingly dead or abducted. In the book's first part, flashbacks from Amy's vivid diary alternate with Nick's present experience of growing police suspicion and media frenzy. David Fincher's film borrows much of that structure but what makes the novel a better prospect for adaptation than the average bestseller is the peculiarly hard-to-nail characters it constructs.

Amy and Nick were journalists in New York who met at a party in Dumbo, Brooklyn, and found their 'better selves' through each other (Flynn was herself a journalist, so she knows the background). As a young girl, New York sophisticate Amy had been the inspiration for a series of children's books – 'Amazing Amy' – that made her self-satisfied parents' careers but left her failing to keep up with her fictional counterpart. By contrast, Nick came to the city from backwater Missouri and made good. However, the crash of 2008 saw

Flynn creates as interesting a critique of modern marriage as Richard Yates's 'Revolutionary Road' did for the 1950s variety



White hot: Rosamund Pike as Amy Dunne

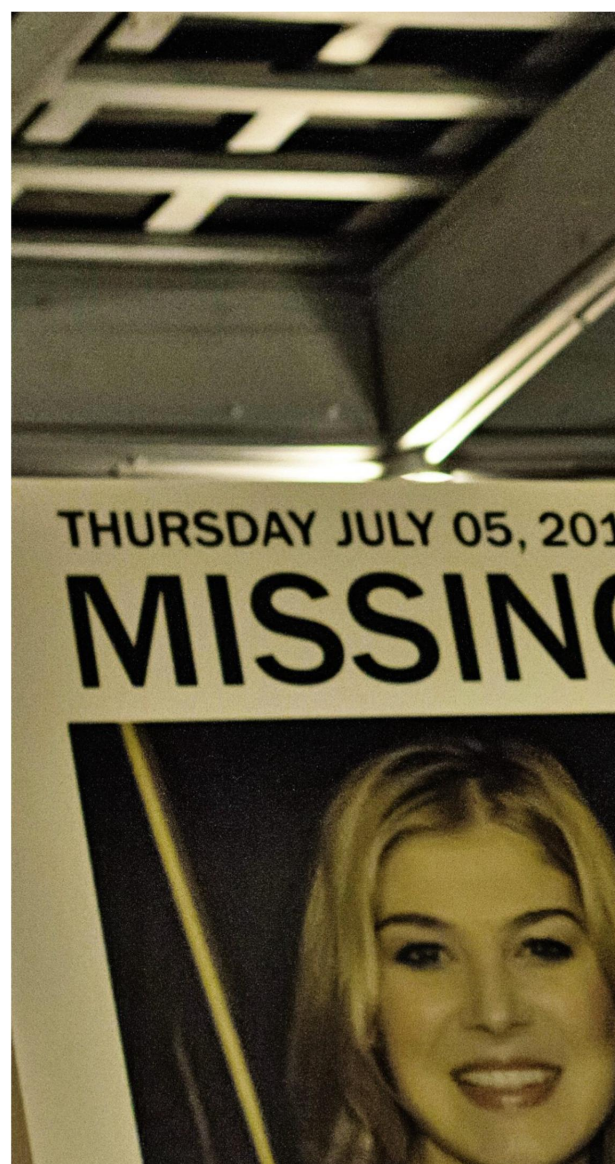
them both made redundant, and they had to move to Nick's hometown, with him owning a bar with his sister Margo and Amy staying home and occasionally bristling at her fate.

For the movie, of course, that's all mostly backstory – even if it touches on the real fate of dozens of journos. From the rapid montage of pristine suburban street furniture with which Fincher establishes an airless mood onwards, what matters first is that Nick is the prime suspect in his wife's disappearance and possible murder. Since it's the film's purpose to bedazzle you with its many charmingly intricate volte-faces and interlaced clues, I will try here not give plot detail, but you may want to wait and read this after you've seen the film.

Amy's disappearance happens on Nick's birthday, and a treasure hunt she's laid out for him, as she does every year, only leads him deeper into the mire of suspicion. The media circus too – portrayed with flair by a combination of poisonous female TV presenters and a lawn-based paparazzi chorus line – wants to make him a nationally hated figure, much like the real-life convicted killer Scott Peterson, whose wife disappeared in 2002 and whose suspicious behaviour afterwards makes his case a blueprint of sorts for this film. The police – represented mostly by the seemingly sympathetic but hardnosed Detective Rhonda Boney (Kim Dickens) – know that something happened in the house, because there's evidence of struggle, blood loss and a clean-up. Nick, his basic honesty compromised by vanity, seems unable to stop digging himself deeper into trouble by keeping details from them.

But Fincher doesn't merely want to keep you guessing who-done-what, he also wants to keep Nick and Amy ambiguous for as long as possible – and even to throw doubt on the nature of identity itself. He's a master of what I want to call pop perversity. He likes to create a polished hyperreal world where inscrutable, ordinary-looking people have the darkest potential. *Gone Girl* moves along with a dazzling visual dexterity that's more than a match for the novel's own velocity, but with the amplification that every scene seems charged with the energy of potential psychological dysfunction – a rather Hitchcockian mode.

Since Fincher's films are always free of visual distraction, the task of bringing off the mood of constant doubt falls heavily on the actors. Fincher likes tamped-down performances, so it's helpful for Ben Affleck that his Nick is caught on camera smiling next to a 'missing' poster and afterwards becomes someone terrified of using the wrong facial expression. Despite his muscular physical presence, Affleck must use minimal gestures – a tilt of the head, raised finger or, of course, narrowed eyes – to convey someone cocky, confused *and* calculating. He does this very well. Nonetheless the film is stolen by Rosamund Pike, whose Amy positively glows with white-hot preciousness and must do because her facial movements are rare and seem timed to perfection to unsettle. Without giving too much away, it's worth noting too Neil Patrick Harris's understated portrayal of Desi Collings, a creepy, rich mama's boy and onetime pursuer of Amy who turns up at the search centre, Tyler Perry's slick lawyer Tanner Bolt, who advises Nick on his media appearances by flicking jelly sweets at him when he gets things wrong, and Carrie Coon as Nick's sane, stalwart rock of a sister Margo, who provides the tears others won't shed.



Hate figure: Ben Affleck as Nick Dunne



Hotshot lawyer: Tyler Perry as Tanner Bolt



Unusually, Flynn the novelist is also the screenwriter. She has handled the necessarily ruthless reduction of material with wit and sharpness. Though she works in a mainstream style, and is more interested in keeping you gripped than in allowing her themes to resonate, she creates as interesting a critique of modern marriage as, say, Richard Yates's *Revolutionary Road* did for the 1950s variety. Her pitch is that the personas we adopt to attract one another are false and get dropped in the process of a long relationship. In one scene, she and Fincher have Amy rail against the 'cool girl' that all men want, who is "hot and understanding" and "never gets angry" – a broader version of the 'manic pixie dream girl' stereotype of much recent complaint. You can also see Amy's approach to marriage as being an extreme version of "The Rules".

That *Gone Girl*, in the interests of narrative satisfaction, lets go of these intriguing ideas fairly quickly is understandable, but it's a risky business keeping so many character uncertainties in the air. At times the characters feel as insubstantial as ghosts and the narrative threatens glibness but it doesn't matter much because the pleasure of Flynn's narrative is just how outlandish it becomes, ending in wild transgressive territory that Pedro Almodóvar might envy. I had a great time watching it. 

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Arnon Milchan
Reese Witherspoon
Céan Chaffin
Joshua Donen
Screenplay
Gillian Flynn
Based on her novel
Director of Photography
Jeff Cronenweth
Film Editor
Kirk Baxter
Production Designer

Donald Graham Burt
Music
Trent Reznor
Atticus Ross
Sound Design
Ren Klyce
Costume Designer
Trish Summerville

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Enterprises S.a.r.l.
and TSG
Entertainment
Finance LLC (in all
other territories)
Production Companies
Twentieth Century

Fox and Regency
Enterprises present
a David Fincher film
Made in association
with TSG
Entertainment
Executive Producers
Leslie Dixon
Bruna Papandrea

Cast
Ben Affleck
Nick Dunne

Rosamund Pike
Amy Dunne
Neil Patrick Harris
Desi Collings
Tyler Perry
Tanner Bolt
Carrie Coon
Margo Dunne
Kim Dickens
Detective Rhonda
Boney
Patrick Fugit
Officer James Gilpin
David Clennon

Rand Elliott
Lisa Banes
Marybeth Elliott
Scot McNairy
Tommy O'Hara

Dolby Digital
In Colour
[2.35:1]

Distributor
20th Century Fox
International (UK)

US, present day. Bar-owner and ex-journalist Nick Dunne returns to his suburban Missouri home to find his chic ex-New Yorker wife Amy – the inspiration for her parents' hugely successful children's book series 'Amazing Amy' – is missing. Police find evidence of a struggle and blood loss and Nick comes under suspicion from both the media (after he's caught smiling next to a 'missing' poster) and the police, who discover that he has huge credit-card debt for purchases he denies making.

Nick's loyal sister Margo discovers that he's been having an affair with Andie, one of his creative writing students. A treasure hunt pre-arranged by Amy for Nick's birthday leads to more evidence against him. A woman neighbour reveals that Amy was pregnant. Realising that Amy knew about his affair and has set him up, Nick hires superstar defence lawyer Tanner Bolt, who suggests that he confess live on air to adultery. Just as the interview is

about to take place, Andie beats him to it.

Meanwhile Amy hides out at a cabin rental site. She is befriended by Greta, a victim of domestic violence, who eventually realises that she is the missing Amy and gangs up with Jeff, another itinerant, to snatch her money belt. Penniless, Amy throws herself on the mercy of Desi Collings, her rich ex-stalker, who makes her a semi-prisoner in his luxurious guesthouse. After seeing Nick make an appeal on TV saying that he loves her, Amy sets about framing Desi for rape, slitting his throat mid-orgasm. Then she turns up on Nick's doorstep.

Nick can't prove what has happened. Having faked her pregnancy, Amy now conceives using sperm Nick had previously deposited. Though Amy is clearly sociopathic, Nick finds the excitement of their old New York relationship has returned. He'll stick around to protect his child.



Shadows and fog: Jake Gyllenhaal plays Louis Bloom, who finds his *métier* as a maverick newshound selling footage of urban accidents and crime scenes

Nightcrawler

Director: Dan Gilroy

Reviewed by Demetrios Matheou

Many early references to *Nightcrawler* began by pointing out that it has nothing to do with the Marvel comic-book character. That's true enough; indeed, the film has its toes in other genres altogether, including the media satire. But its protagonist does have a supervillain's bug-eyed creepiness—one can easily imagine Louis Bloom (Jake Gyllenhaal) having fallen into some sort of radioactive gunk. And it's a thought that doesn't help the film's intent.

Our first sight of Bloom establishes a mercurial disposition. Caught in the act of stealing wire fencing on an industrial site, he first tries to sweet-talk the security guard, with disarmingly misplaced confidence; but when he sees and takes a fancy to the guard's wristwatch, he quickly switches to violence. Moments later he's haggling over the price of the fencing while trying to get a job with the man he's selling it to.

"I'm a hard worker. I set high goals. And I'm told I'm persistent," he declares, only to be told, quite reasonably, "I'm not hiring a fucking thief."

Bloom is a ducker and diver, a psychotic with a silver tongue and a surprising desire for gainful employment who finds his *métier* as a maverick newshound selling footage of urban accidents and crime scenes to local TV stations in Los Angeles. There's a sense that Bloom has just landed on planet Earth. He lives in a tiny apartment, scrupulously ironing while glued to the TV news. He dresses like a nerd, buttoned up and greased down, gaunt, eyes wide and unblinking. We learn nothing of his backstory other than his admission to the equally unscrupulous Nina, a TV news editor who buys his footage, that he has little formal education, learning everything he knows from the web.

And that's all that writer-director Dan Gilroy wants us to know. For Bloom is a symbol, the monstrous means by which Gilroy critiques a society whose moral compass is being eroded by the internet and reality TV, with information and access of every kind at people's fingertips without any corresponding wisdom or responsibility. It's no accident that the only people who fall

for Bloom's ludicrous hand-me-down spiel are Rick, a simpleton hired as his assistant, and Nina, so hungry for ratings that she really doesn't care who's providing the material.

The film exercises an edgy charm whenever Gyllenhaal's antihero is slithering through his haggles or cons, whether selling a stolen bicycle to a pawnbroker, attempting to coerce Nina into bed or elevating the hapless Rick (played with an endearing mixture of stupidity and desperation by Riz Ahmed) from intern to CEO with no increase in his paltry pay. And sometimes the satire hits its mark—in broad strokes on the streets in the form of Bill Paxton's sleazy veteran declaring that "if it bleeds, it leads"; a shade more subtly at Nina's TV station, where the newscasters introduce every segment with the disingenuous announcement that "what follows is graphic", their shameless seduction of viewers disguised as concern. Rene Russo is terrific as the cynical Nina, whose ideal story is urban crime in which affluent whites are attacked by ethnic minorities, her favoured image "a screaming woman running down the street with her throat cut". Stoking Bloom's pursuit of sordid material (she uses such choice headlines as "Horror in Echo Park"



Partners in crime: Gyllenhaal with Riz Ahmed, who plays his hapless partner Rick

Buttoned up and greased down, eyes wide and unblinking, there's a sense that this aspiring sensationalist newshound has just landed on Earth

epitomised by Bloom. The character works well enough as a twisted product of the age, an empty shell filled by the web, and a walking argument against its ethos of empowerment. But Gilroy's commentary on the news media would have been better made if Nina were in thrall to an imbecile or a naïf rather than a sociopath.

From *Donnie Darko* (2001) to *Enemy* (2013) via *Brokeback Mountain* (2005), Jake Gyllenhaal has quietly become one of Hollywood's most

daring leading men, never averse to dipping a toe into darkness. As Bloom he is entertaining, intriguing and chilling; his final censure of his partner – “You took my bargaining power, Rick” – gives one goose bumps. But he's also pushing too hard, and his weird and wired performance makes the character implausible; anyone with their wits about them would cross the street.

De Niro pulled off a similar exercise in derangement to greater effect as the wannabe stand-up Rupert Pupkin in Scorsese's *The King of Comedy* (1983). De Niro's aspirant made us squirm with embarrassment because we could actually believe him. And importantly, Pupkin's self-delusion puts him behind bars; the fact that Bloom is free to continue prowling through a *Nightcrawler 2* suggests the extent to which Gilroy's cautionary tale has descended into pulp fiction. **S**

and “Drunk Man Kills Biker”), Nina evokes Faye Dunaway's programming executive in *Network* (1976), as much a victim herself of the soulless quest for ratings, the caked make-up worn for her ‘date’ with Bloom a clue to the price she's paid.

Gilroy co-wrote *The Bourne Legacy* (2012) with his brother Tony, who directed that film and scripted the earlier *Bourne* pictures. For his directorial debut, Gilroy demonstrates what he's learned about well-choreographed velocity – Bloom's high-speed pursuits of sirens through a dreamily nocturnal, widescreen LA are pretty thrilling. Other sequences have some of Brian De Palma's intricacy and tension, not least Bloom's furtive filming of a murder scene and elaborate staging of the killers' arrest, a set-up he hopes will yield maximum collateral damage. You might say that *Nightcrawler*'s cameraman is a distant cousin of Travolta's sound recordist in De Palma's *Blow Out* (1981), from the other side of the tracks.

But as well executed as it is, ultimately the film leaves one feeling short-changed and hanging in the air. Gilroy seems to have become caught between possibilities – satire, black comedy, psycho-thriller – and in the end does commit sufficiently to any of them. The problem is

Credits and Synopsis

Producers
Michel Litvak
Jake Gyllenhaal
David Lancaster
Jennifer Fox
Tony Gilroy
Written by
Dan Gilroy
Director of Photography

Robert Elswit
Editor
John Gilroy
Production Designer
Kevin Kavanaugh
Music
James Newton Howard
Sound Mixer
Shawn Holden

Costume Designer
Amy Wescott
Production Company
Bold Films presents
Executive Producers
Gary Michael Walters
Betsy Danbury

Cast
Jake Gyllenhaal
Louis Bloom
Rene Russo
Nina Romina
Riz Ahmed
Rick
Bill Paxton
Joe Loder

Kevin Rahm
Frank Kruse
Michael Hyatt
Detective Frontiere
Ann Cusack
Linda
Dolby Digital/ Datasat
In Colour

[2.35:1]

Distributor
E1 Films

Present-day Los Angeles. Louis Bloom is a loner who's looking for a job but willing to break the law when it suits him. When he witnesses a freelance camera team, led by the extrovert Joe Loder, filming the aftermath of a car accident, Bloom finds his métier. Buying a camera and a police radio tracker, he sets up on his own, quickly learning the skills of the maverick newshounds, who swoop on live crime scenes and accidents and sell their footage to sensation-hungry TV stations.

Working at night, Bloom soon becomes the key supplier to Nina, news editor of the channel KWLA, who recognises his audacity and eye for gory images. He buys a fast car and better equipment, and hires an assistant, Rick, who principally acts as navigator as Bloom speeds between incidents. As he becomes more confident, Bloom starts to transgress. Reaching a road accident before the emergency services, he moves

a body so that he can frame a better shot. Having rejected a job offer from Loder, he sabotages one of Loder's news vans, shooting footage as his rival is carried away from his own car crash. Bloom asks Nina on a date, bartering the promise of continued exclusivity for sex, knowing how desperate for ratings she is.

Arriving at the scene of a murder as it's taking place, Bloom secretly films the killers. He withholds the information from detectives, instead following the men and making a 911 call that places them in a restaurant, where he's on hand to film the bloody confrontation with police. He also orchestrates the shooting of his partner, capturing Rick's death on camera. The police suspect Bloom of being behind the restaurant incident, but have no evidence with which to charge him. He buys a fleet of vans and hires a team of interns for his new company, Video Production News.



Belfast boy: Jack O'Connell has a charismatic facility for suggesting the vulnerable soul behind a tough-nut exterior

71

United Kingdom 2014
Director: Yann Demange
Certificate 15 99m 16s



See interview
on page 10

Reviewed by Trevor Johnston

It's a scene familiar from any number of war movies. The platoon members sit attentively while their commanding officer points at a map, outlining the details of the upcoming mission. Usually, that's a guarantee that all will not go precisely to plan, but the soldiers' individual acts of courage or ingenuity will likely shape their own resolution. In this instance, however, the generic aspects of the story take on a very individual shading, since these British squaddies are getting their heads round the tribal geography of early-70s West Belfast. The year is 1971 and members of the British military – at first welcomed by a Catholic community living in fear of their Protestant neighbours, as political tensions escalated into violence – have become IRA targets and the object of much resentment in Republican areas. West Belfast, as the officer explains to his men, offers the most complex few square miles in the whole fractious environment, since Republican and Unionist heartlands exist mere streets away from

each other. The former is definitely unfriendly territory, the latter somewhat more welcoming – a difference that could mean life or death for any of the soldiers yet to find his bearings.

Yann Demange's debut feature puts the audience in the boots of Jack O'Connell's teenage Private Hook, just shipped over from the north of England and about to hit the pavement on patrol for the first time. His fears are those of any young soldier facing a combat situation, though here the enemy is particularly elusive and ill-defined, apart from the telling technicality that he'll be pointing his rifle at British citizens on British soil. In this way, the film plays with elements both universal and particular, and to an extent it's where between the two the dividing line falls that accounts for its strengths and weaknesses.

For one thing, Gary Hook is an everyman, virtually to the point of anonymity. A brief opening section sees him contacting his little brother, who appears to be in the same children's home where he himself grew up, thus hinting that the protagonist might find in British army fatigues structure and prospects otherwise lacking in his life. Nothing conclusive, though, so as Hook beds down in his regiment's makeshift Belfast accommodation, whether he's bristling antihero, colonialist dupe or eager psycho is all up for grabs. This works well for the story when his very first operation goes pear-shaped, a riot

breaking out when the residents of a Catholic side-street are incensed by the line of Brits protecting the RUC during a brutal house-search for Republican weapons. Soon Hook's comrade is lying dead from an IRA bullet, and the lad himself – minus his weapon – is haring along back alleys in fear of his life, armed pursuers on his tail, his uniform now a potentially deadly liability.

That we're absolutely on the side of this young fugitive is in part evidence of O'Connell's charismatic facility for suggesting the vulnerable soul behind a tough-nut exterior. He doesn't have nearly as much character to work with here as he did in David Mackenzie's potent prison saga *Starred Up*, but he does enough to have us worrying for him as Demange whizzes the camera through a dizzying warren of terraced houses and backyards. Notwithstanding relatively modest resources, and indeed locations in Liverpool, Blackburn and Sheffield rather than Belfast itself, the director brings vividness into play every time the going gets tough. The build-up of panic during the riot and Hook's subsequent headlong flight are certainly effectively orchestrated, though they're topped by a later set piece involving an explosion that comes without warning in a local pub, where the aftermath of blanketing smoke, charred victims and a ringing soundscape that suggests temporary hearing loss combine to create a



'71 gets the tribalism of the Troubles right

memorably infernal vision of urban carnage.

Such visceral you-are-there intensity only gets the film so far, however, and Gregory Burke's script, essentially adept in the way it seizes on West Belfast as a microcosm of the wider Troubles, gets good mileage out of this innocent-grunt-abroad material before it necessarily moves on to detail the surrounding sociopolitical landscape. His dialogue is spot-on, and he certainly gets the tribalism right. The little boy on the Loyalist barricade who asks Hook whether he's a Protestant or a Catholic might seem schematic to the outsider, but my memories of growing up in the east of the city during the same dark era confirm that purposely divisive them-and-us indoctrination was standard Ulster practice. Burke devotes much expository energy to a hawks-versus-doves conflict within Republican ranks, as rival factions contend to capture O'Connell's resilient fugitive. But Burke, who won widespread acclaim for his Iraq tour-of-duty play *Black Watch*, is also alert to the distinctive power balance within the British forces, where the unit's posh-accented lieutenant finds himself outranked by the plain-clothes intelligence crew (fronted by the ever villainous

Haring along back alleys in fear of his life, Jack O'Connell's teenage Private Hook might turn out to be bristling antihero, colonialist dupe or eager psycho

Sean Harris), who are secretly scheming their way towards undercover influence on both sides of the conflict's ideological schism.

Much of this is slightly superficial – workable as a series of plot holes into which the undercharacterised Hook is positioned when necessary, but not altogether persuasive as historical analysis. Spotting British army skulduggery while only sketching in the local roots of the turmoil ultimately makes for a decidedly tangential and somewhat partial approach to hugely complex terrain.

As such, for all the film's immediate impact (especially in the stronger first half), '71 fits alongside such relatively recent thrillers as Kari Skogland's *Fifty Dead Men Walking* and James Marsh's *Shadow Dancer*, which lack a defined thematic agenda and instead use the Northern Irish setting as a handy provider of explosive conflict and readymade tension. Given that the action element is the film's most forceful component, it might even have more in common with, say, Walter Hill's 1981 lost-patrol minor classic *Southern Comfort* than with the output of a previous, more politically engaged generation of British filmmakers who were working on the small screen while fires were still raging in Northern Ireland – pace the angry, bleak absurdism of Alan Clarke's 1988 *Elephant*, for example, finding a perfect equilibrium between the universal and the particular – or indeed the arrestingly Welsh take on the Troubles' colonial aspect in Karl Francis's 1986 S4C drama *Boy Soldier*.

Little seen, and admittedly somewhat ungainly, that film at least had the advantage of putting its youthful private's moral awakening effectively centre-stage, something that Demange and Burke struggle to achieve, since the blank-canvas portrayal of Hook in the opening exchanges comes back to haunt the film later on. Yes, there's more initial sympathy for the fierce jeopardy in which he finds himself, but as the story closes in on its conclusion there's not much narrative traction involved in his gaining a fuller picture of his own side's malpractices, since to this rather amorphous individual it never seemed that much of an issue anyway. Story-wise, the result

falls into a hole between the universality of the frightened kid in uniform and the challenging particulars of Northern Ireland's raging past – but there is still much to admire on screen, not least the palpable atmosphere of incipient dread in the labyrinth of unfamiliar streets.

Belfast-born David Holmes's unsettling, percussive score (thankfully devoid of the clichéd Celtic folkery most Ulster-set films are burdened with) and cameraman Tat Radcliffe's assured approximation of the washed-out palette of vintage news footage make their contribution to a confident, muscular debut from Demange; and for all its flaws '71 offers a lapel-grabbing, immersive viewing experience likely to shake up audiences who couldn't otherwise care less about the boredom-factor whys and wherefores of Northern Ireland's bitterest years. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Angus Lamont
Robin Gutch
Written by
Gregory Burke
Director of Photography
Tat Radcliffe
Editor
Chris Wyatt
Production Designer
Chris Oddy
Original Music
David Holmes
Sound Mixer
Rashad Omar
Costume Designer
Jane Petrie

@Channel
Four Television
Corporation, British
Film Institute, Screen
Yorkshire, Run 71 Ltd
Production Companies
Film4, BFI, Screen
Yorkshire and
Creative Scotland
present a Crab
Apple Films & Warp
Films production
Made with the

support of the
BFI Film Fund
Executive Producers
Sam Lavender
Tessa Ross
Dan MacRae
Danny Perkins
Hugo Heppell
Mark Herbert
Lizzie Francke
Leslie Finlay

Cast
Jack O'Connell
Private Gary Hook
Paul Anderson
Military Reaction
Force NCO
Leslie Lewis
Richard Dormer
Eamon
Sean Harris
Military Reaction
Force Officer Sandy
Martin McCann
Paul Haggerty
Charlie Murphy
Brigid
Sam Reid
Lieutenant Armitage
Killian Scott
Quinn

David Wilmot
Boyle
Babou Ceesay
corporal
Sam Hazeldine
commanding officer
Barry Keoghan
Sean Bannon
Jack Lowden
Thommo
James McArdle
Sergeant
Liam McMahon
O'Brien
Aaron Monaghan
McCann
Paul Popplewell
Training Corporal
Marsh
Corey McKinley
Billy
Harry Verity
Derren

In Colour
[2.35:1]
Distributor
Studiocanal Limited

The north of England, 1971. Bidding farewell to his little brother Darren in a children's home, young soldier Gary Hook is sent to Northern Ireland with his platoon. On their first operation, the soldiers are surrounded by rioting locals angered by RUC brutality, and Hook finds himself running for his life after his colleague Thommo is shot by IRA man Haggerty.

Without his weapon, a disoriented Hook evades his pursuers and reaches a Protestant enclave nearby. He is befriended by a young boy, who takes him to his uncle's pub. There, Hook spots British undercover officer Lewis assisting Loyalists with a bomb, which later detonates unexpectedly, causing carnage. Hook escapes with minor injuries, helps the now badly maimed boy, then flees. Later he's found collapsed in the street by kindly Brigid and her dad Eamon, who carry him back to the Republican Divis estate; discovering that he's a soldier, however, they contact IRA chief Boyle, to avoid suspicions of collusion.

A worried Hook slips away, stabs Haggerty dead on a walkway, and is then held in a derelict pub by rival IRA man Quinn, whose youthful acolyte Sean proves unable to pull the trigger until Lewis and undercover commander Browning burst in. Lewis shoots Sean but his attempt to strangle Hook is witnessed by startled regular army lieutenant Armitage. Sean kills Lewis, then Armitage shoots the teenager dead.

A subsequent military enquiry exonerates Browning, ignores Armitage and dismisses Hook, who returns home to rescue Darren from care and begin a new life.



Family ties: Private Hook visits his younger brother on the eve of his deployment to Northern Ireland

As Above/So Below

USA 2014
Director: John Erick Dowdle
Certificate 15 93m 6s

Reviewed by Roger Clarke

Taking its keynotes from *Tomb Raider* (2001) and *The Descent* (2005), *As Above/So Below* is a claustrophobic underground thriller augmented by supernatural elements. Remarkably similar to episode 11 in season four of the Syfy show *Warehouse 13*, it is set in the real-life ancient catacombs beneath modern-day Paris and concerns the retrieval of a supernatural artefact from a hidden tomb. Perdita Weeks plays the Lara Croft figure, a character supposedly garlanded with multiple doctorates. After she's spent a few hours in the catacombs wearing a diaphanous top possibly designed by Ghost, however, we realise that the writer/director combo, brothers Drew and John Erick Dowdle, have more likely cast her for the way her backside looks when she's crawling through a tunnel.

The Dowdle brothers are well-known genre players, responsible for the equally claustrophobic *Devil* (2010, produced by M. Night Shyamalan), the 'found footage' virus thriller *Quarantine* (2008) and the 'found footage' serial-killer movie *The Poughkeepsie Tapes* (2007). Despite its lo-fi pretension, *As Above* looks handsome and is well crafted and largely enjoyable, with a fairly restrained use of what can only be described as ghost-train frights. Its Parisian location is also entirely to its benefit. **S**



Tablet for two: Perdita Weeks, Ben Feldman

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by Thomas Tull Jon Jashni Drew Dowdle Patrick Aiello	Annie Bloom	Edwin Hodge Benji
Written by John Erick Dowdle Drew Dowdle	©Legendary Pictures Productions, LLC	Francois Civil Papillon
Director of Photography Leo Hinstin	Production Companies Legendary Pictures and Universal Pictures present a	Marion Lambert Siouxie
Film Editor Elliot Greenberg	Legendary Pictures/ Brothers Dowdle production	Ali Marhyar Zed
Production Designer Louise Marzaroli	Executive Producer Alex Hedlund	Dolby Digital/ SDDS/Datasat In Colour [1.85:1]
Music Keefus Ciancia	Cast Perdita Weeks Scarlett Marlowe	Distributor Universal Pictures International UK & Eire
Sound Kelly Oxford	Ben Feldman George	
Costume Designer		

Paris, present day. Archaeologist Scarlett Marlowe is determined to complete her father's legacy by finding the fabled Philosopher's Stone – an alchemical gemstone capable of turning base metal into gold and giving eternal life. Clues lead to the catacombs of Paris. Scarlett and her fellow explorers begin to experience devilish hallucinations. The stone is found but it has to be relinquished to save the life of a wounded team member, Scarlett's former boyfriend. The team return to the surface.

The Babadook

Australia/Canada/The Netherlands 2013
Director: Jennifer Kent
Certificate 15 93m 45s

Reviewed by Roger Clarke

Spoiler alert: this review reveals a plot twist

A character wakes from a bad dream into worse. Well, not to begin with... *The Babadook*, the feature debut of Australian writer-director Jennifer Kent, starts with a quick series of shots that pop-pop-pop along much like a TV advert. An attractive mother and son are searching a shabby-chic house for – what? – a Kinder Surprise? Canvas shoes from Gap? What's under the bed? A spidery psychopomp from a children's book will shortly make its presence known.

Samuel (Noah Wiseman) has been disturbed from the moment he arrived in the world six years ago, shortly after his father died in a car crash as he drove mother Amelia (Essie Davis) helter-skelter to the maternity ward. Samuel is troubled by night terrors that seem to drift ineluctably into the daylight hours. There's not much support for Amelia, certainly not at the nursing home where she works, and where the old people seem to occupy a kind of shadow life, spooky in itself. Her sister is brutally unhelpful.

One night, for Samuel's bedtime story, Amelia embarks on an unfamiliar tome grabbed from a shelf: *The Babadook*. It promises the stuff of nightmares – a great, sooty ink-blot of imminence. At first Amelia dismisses all the things that subsequently go wrong – the pieces of glass in the soup, sundry little acts of defiance – as just her son acting up. But she becomes increasingly convinced that the Babadook is real, and finally sees the monster, clinging to the ceiling, about to possess her. It's not a pretty sight.

In Fortean terms this can be described as 'thought form' operatics. In pop-culture terms, fans of the comedy *The League of Gentlemen* will be reminded of Papa Lazarou, a demonic, blacked-up circus master and doorstepping collector of half-reluctant wives. In horror-movie terms, this is *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Shining* (first she's Wendy, then she's Jack) and *Repulsion*. In occult terms, it's rather more complicated – does the entity create the book or does the book create the entity?

The Babadook is artfully styled and shot. The



Preying guest: Noah Wiseman

cinematography is by Polish DP Radek Ladcuk, making his first English-language film – he's best known for *Suicide Room* (2011), which featured a teenager withdrawing from reality into the virtual world. The look of the film is rooted, according to the director's statement, in German expressionism, though it's hard to see much of that here apart from the stylised set, in which every object seems chosen for its *unheimlich* qualities. The score serves the film, and is not especially prominent. The palette is muted.

So what makes this film better than other genre films of its ilk? Yes, there is the odd fairground shock. But there are details no male genre director would put in – a guilt-free use of a sex-toy near the beginning, for example. I also enjoyed the way Amelia's sister's bourgeois, disapproving friends are depicted with a kind of eye-rolling amusement as judgemental, lemon-sucking Stepford wives. At a surgery, a doctor observes that Samuel is "very committed to the monster theory". That's a wonderful detail, a quick, brilliant piece of characterisation.

"If you're really hungry, why don't you go and eat *shit*!" Amelia shouts at her son at one point. This is a mother's anti-child horror. But the resolution in the end is nurturing rather than killing. Amelia tames the Babadook, keeps it in the cellar, and every now and again goes down to feed it a dish of worms. Now you wouldn't get that in a Hollywood movie. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Producers Kristina Ceyton Kristian Moliere	Costume Designer Heather Wallace	Film Corporation and Smoking Gun Productions and Entertainment One	Smoking Gun Productions	Cast Essie Davis Amelia	In Colour [2.35:1]
Written by Jennifer Kent	©Babadook Films Pty Ltd, Causeway Films Pty Ltd. South Australian Film Corporation and Screen Australia	Developed with the assistance of Waking Dream Productions and the Screen Australia Enterprise Program	Financed with the assistance of South Australian Film Corporation	Noah Wiseman Samuel	Distributor Icon Film Distribution
Director of Photography Radek Ladcuk	Production Companies Screen Australia and Causeway Films present in association with the South Australian	Developed with the assistance of NSW Government, Screen NSW and Binger Filmfab Causeway Films,	Principal investor Australian Government. Screen Australia	Hayley McElhinney Claire	
Editor Simon Njoo			Executive Producers Jonathan Page Michael Tear Jan Chapman Jeff Harrison	Daniel Henshall Robbie	
Production Designer Alex Holmes				Barbara West Mrs Roach	
Composer Jed Kurzel				Ben Winspear Oskar	
Sound Designer Frank Lipson				Dolby Digital	

South Australia, present day. Haunted by memories of a car crash that killed her husband six years ago, Amelia struggles with an unrewarding job and the increasingly disruptive behaviour of her son Samuel. One evening, for his bedtime story, Samuel chooses a mysterious book called 'The Babadook', which describes an unpleasant supernatural entity that will inveigle its way into their home. Soon Amelia and Samuel are beset by problems: Amelia's sister turns on her, claiming that Samuel is too dangerous to play

with other children; Samuel is excluded from school; glass turns up in food. The roles of child and adult become fluid. Amelia sees the Babadook clinging to the ceiling above her bed and it falls into her mouth. Possessed, Amelia kills the family dog and seems about to kill Samuel too. She vomits black fluid. The Babadook is neutralised, and Amelia confines it to the cellar. Life improves for Amelia and Samuel – though every now and then Amelia goes down to the cellar to feed live worms to the Babadook.

Before I Go to Sleep

USA 2013
Director: Rowan Joffe
Certificate 15 91m 51s

Reviewed by Catherine Wheatley

S.J. Watson's novel *Before I Go to Sleep* opens with the indelible image of a woman who wakes up believing that she is 25, only to be winded by her wrinkled, middle-aged hands. Following a head injury, Chrissie's memory resets itself every day, and she wakes each morning believing it is 14 years earlier. She has no memory of her nice, dull husband Ben or her suburban home: everything that should be ordinary is strange.

What's so unsettling about the scenario is precisely its rootedness in quotidian detail. Claude Chabrol, that master of everyday horror, would have had a field day with it. But writer-director Rowan Joffe and producer Ridley Scott bury the clever conceit in expensive production values and in doing so sacrifice all atmosphere. The terrifying notion of finding oneself suddenly aged loses any impact when incarnated by the tightly stretched flesh of Nicole Kidman. Playing opposite her, Mark Strong and Colin Firth struggle spiritedly with the banal dialogue. When Firth moans, "I just don't want to be bloody Ben any more," it's possible he's broken character.

The unreliability of memory is a subject that lends itself particularly well to digital cinema, and Joffe makes a smart move in this regard by substituting Chrissie's journal for a video diary. But if the switch is a gesture towards the perfidy of images vis-à-vis the written word, it's more apposite than he might have thought. Ⓢ

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by Liza Marshall Mark Gill Matt O'Toole Written by Rowan Joffe Based on the novel S.J. Watson Director of Photography Ben Davis Editor Melanie Ann Oliver Production Designer Kave Quinn Music Edward Shearmur Production Sound Mixer Simon Hayes Costume Designer Michele Clapton	StudioCanal A film by Rowan Joffe Executive Producers Ridley Scott Avi Lerner Trevor Short Kristina Dubin Danny Perkins Jenny Borgars Boaz Davidson John Thompson Geyer Kosinski Lonnie Ramati Carlo Dusi	Dolby Digital In Colour [2.35:1] Distributor Studiocanal Limited
Cast Nicole Kidman Christine, 'Chrissie' Colin Firth Mike Mark Strong Dr Nasch Anne-Marie Duff Claire Adam Levy Ben Dean Charles Chapman Adam		

London, the present. Middle-aged Chrissie Lucas suffers from amnesia and can store memories for only 24 hours. She is contacted by Dr Nasch, who informs her that they have been working to recover her memory, without telling her husband Ben. Nasch guides her to a video diary she has been keeping. Chrissie learns that the man she is living with is not really Ben. He is Mike: he and Chrissie were having an affair and he attacked her when she ended it. He kidnapped her after Ben, unable to cope with her illness, left her. They fight. Chrissie wakes in hospital. Nasch brings in the real Ben, who introduces her to her son Adam.

The Boxtrolls

USA 2014
Directors: Anthony Stacchi, Graham Annable
Certificate PG 96m 36s

Reviewed by Kate Stables

Part Roald Dahl, part Ronald Searle in style, this gleefully dark and curlicued stop-motion animated fantasy about a pair of plucky Victorian children defending harmless monsters from extermination is an all-round delight. Unlike animation studio Laika's previous hits *Coraline* (2009) and *ParaNorman* (2012), it's a ghoulish period adventure rather than a horror story, but it shares those films' artistry and jaunty sense of menace. It devotes much screen time to exploring its exquisitely detailed world, which boasts a steampunk aesthetic, an eccentric cheese-centred humour and a strong grotesque streak (the humans are as misshapen as the monsters).

Purposely episodic, full of rooftop-scrambling 3D chases, hidden secrets and surprising setbacks, the story is as elaborate and twisty as the animation. This is balanced out (as *ParaNorman* was) by the unusually thoughtful treatment of challenging themes such as mob frenzy, fear of difference and even (treading very lightly) Boxtroll genocide. Mocking the Victorians' relish for grand guignol, the script has a cheerful grisliness, shown off as the villain's henchmen (a deadpan Nick Frost and Richard Ayoade) muse on the duality of good and evil. Voicework is excellent throughout, but Ben Kingsley's full-throttle villainy as Snatcher fits the film's florid, theatrical tone to a T. Ⓢ

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by David Bleiman Ichioka Travis Knight Screenplay Irena Brignull Adam Pava Story adapted by Anthony Stacchi, Phil Dale Based upon the book <i>Here Be Monsters</i> by Alan Snow Director of Photography John Ashlee Prat Editor Edie Ichioka Production Designer Paul Lasaine Music Dario Marianelli Supervising Sound Designers Ren Klyce Tom Myers Costume Designer Deborah Cook Animation Supervisor Brad Schiff	@Boxtrolls, LLC Production Companies Focus Features presents a Laika Entertainment production Voice Cast Ben Kingsley Archibald Snatcher Isaac Hempstead-Wright Eggs Elle Fanning Winnie Portley-Rind Tracy Morgan Mr Gristle Richard Ayoade Mr Pickles Nick Frost Mr Trout Jared Harris Lord Portley-Rind Toni Collette Lady Portley-Rind Simon Pegg Herbert Trubshaw	Sound In Colour [1.78:1] Some screenings presented in 3D Distributor Universal Pictures International UK & Eire
Dolby Digital/ Datasat Digital		

Cheesebridge, the late 19th century. Villainous Archibald Snatcher convinces the town that Boxtrolls, peaceful underground-dwelling creatures, are child-stealers, and starts catching them – he will become a town elder once they have been exterminated. Eggs, an orphan raised by the Boxtrolls, teams up with a girl called Winnie to save his friends. Snatcher raids the Boxtrolls' hideout, intending to incinerate them. Eggs urges them to resist but sees them all apparently crushed. Snatcher tries to incinerate Eggs in the town square. The Boxtrolls appear from their hiding place and destroy his exterminating machine. Snatcher, fatally allergic to cheese, explodes after colliding with a giant Brie. Boxtrolls and humans coexist happily ever after.

The Calling

Canada/USA 2013
Director: Jason Stone
Certificate 15 107m 57s

Reviewed by Nick Pinkerton

Spoiler alert: this review reveals a plot twist

Based on a 2008 novel by Michael Redhill (writing under a pseudonym), Jason Stone's debut feature is an adequately distracting slab of Southern Ontario gothic that has Susan Sarandon's achy, middle-aged, whisky-breathed detective Hazel Micallef tracking a serial killer across the Great White North.

The identity of the killer – played by a looming, generously bearded Christopher Heyerdahl, who is not precisely acting against type – is given away quite early on. Only somewhat later is it revealed that he is participating in a sort of ritualistic assisted suicide, with the full cooperation of his terminally ill victims. Even when the perp gets the drop on one of Micallef's investigating officers (Topher Grace), he refrains from delivering the fatal blow.

The stakes, it must be said, could be higher – which doesn't need to be an insurmountable problem. But *The Calling* doesn't do irony at a level of sophistication beyond, say, a hard cut from farm dogs eating a discarded human stomach to a crime-scene photographer cleaning his breakfast plate. Aside from tone-deaf gallows humour, there is a good helping of standing and sitting around and reeling out backstory by the likes of Ellen Burstyn and Donald Sutherland, passing time. It's a good stock of actors but assembled for what? Like Micallef's quest to save the already dying, *The Calling* never manages to explain why it is necessary, while it's too po-faced to be enjoyably disposable. Ⓢ

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by Randy Manis Lonny Dubrofsky Scott Abramovitch Nicholas Tabarrok Written by Scott Abramovitch Based on the novel by Inger Ash Wolfe [i.e. Michael Redhill] Director of Photography David Robert Jones Edited by Aaron Marshall Production Designer Oleg M. Savitski Original Music Grayson Matthews Sound Mixer Tom Hilderley Costume Designer Georgina Yarhi	Ball Films production in association with Darius Films Produced with the participation of Téléfilm Canada, Ontario Media Development Corporation Produced with the assistance of Ontario Film and Television Tax Credit, Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit Produced in association with The Movie Network, Movie Central Producers Christine Vachon Jonathan Bronfman	Emily Micallef Christopher Heyerdahl Simon Topher Grace Ben Wingate Donald Sutherland Father Price Kristin Booth Grace Batten Kevin Parent Spere John Ralston Andrew Pederson Ted Whittall Ian Mason Katy Breier Melanie Cartwright Paulino Nunes Officer Mathiesen Dolby Digital In Colour [2.35:1] Distributor Sony Pictures Releasing
Cast Susan Sarandon Hazel Micallef Gil Bellows Detective Ray Green Ellen Burstyn		

Canada, present day. Alcoholic detective Hazel Micallef discovers a grisly murder in the rural town of Fort Dundas. When another killing occurs shortly afterwards, Micallef suspects that a serial killer is at work. The killer is a Catholic mystic and faith healer preying on the terminally ill, and Micallef's associates race to stop him before he can claim another victim. The killer, however, arrives at Micallef's home and takes her hostage. After unsuccessfully trying to convince her to commit suicide, he takes his own life.

Cathedrals of Culture

Germany/Denmark/Austria/France/USA/Japan/Norway/Sweden/Israel/Australia/Poland 2014

Directors: various

Certificate 12A 165m 3s

Reviewed by Hannah McGill

Galvanised, presumably, by the strong response to his 2011 dance documentary *Pina*, Wim Wenders here again unites 3D cinematography and 'high' culture, executive producing this documentary portmanteau on "the soul of buildings" and directing one of its six segments. Architecture is the main focus of attention but the functions, historical identities and imagined emotional lives of the selected structures also factor in.

Visually, the film's six segments take somewhat similar approaches, favouring long, cool shots of interiors with occasional appearances by humans; only Robert Redford's piece on the Salk Institute in San Diego takes a less oblique approach, deploying archive footage of its creator Jonas Salk and architect Louis Kahn explaining their thinking. Redford's is the most conventional documentary piece overall, and arguably slightly ducks the film's whimsical premise – unless you believe that if a building could talk it would explain its own history and functions to you in slick documentary style using a collage of archive footage and talking-head interviews.

Michael Glawogger's piece evades the anthropomorphic challenge in a more elegant manner, locating the soul of the National Library of Russia in its books, and using snatches of literature for the voiceover – although the director's recent death lends a painful and inevitably distracting directness to the themes of eternity and afterlife that echo through the selected words.

The other four films, including Wenders's opener on the Berlin Philharmonic, represent their subjects via first-person voiceovers. In keeping with the peculiar tendency of anthropomorphisation to comprise infantile elements, these narrations largely characterise their subjects as friendly, gentle and unsure



View from the top: Pompidou Centre

of themselves. This makes for much winning cutesiness but arguably doesn't quite suit their grandiosity and certainty of purpose. Does the brash, pushy, airy Pompidou Centre really seem as if it worries daily that no punters will show up, as in its characterisation by Karim Ainouz? Would the Oslo Opera House, as in Margreth Olin's segment, lament its permanence if it could, and wish for the briefer lifespan of a human being? Impossible to say, of course; but it would have created some variation of tone – and perhaps some humour, which is certainly in short supply – if one of the filmmakers had allowed for the possibility that the building in question might have a personality other than that of a wide-eyed, well-meaning naïf.

The resulting overall tone is very Wenders – solemnity about the importance of art and human suffering, combined with a somewhat

sugary appeal to the needy, unspoilt kid in us all – and a little lacking in edge. Olin's piece is the most disappointing: while there is diversion to be found in the fact that it actually features dancing about architecture, her earnestly emoting dancers twinned with shivering homeless folks outside feel like the stuff of a school play. Her segment, like Ainouz's and Wenders's own, rather recalls his *Wings of Desire* (1987); like that film's angels, these buildings' gentle spirits whisper comfortingly to individual human occupants while history wears cruelly on outside. Danish director Michael Madsen colours outside the lines by choosing a prison as his subject, and arguably achieves the most complex results: his 'cathedral' has the most complicated project in terms of the promotion of a shared notion of 'culture', and the juxtapositions of beauty and brutality he finds are hauntingly depicted and described. ☹

Credits and Synopses

Produced by
Erwin M. Schmidt
Gian-Piero Ringel
Production Companies
A Neue Road
Movies production in co-production with Final Cut for Real, Lotus-Film, Mer Film, Les Films d'Ici 2, Sundance Productions/
RadicalMedia, Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg, WOWOW
In collaboration with Arte, ORF Film/Fernseh-Abkommen, Berliner Philharmoniker, Le Centre Georges Pompidou, Halden Prison, The Salk Institute, The National Library of Russia, The Norwegian National Opera & Ballet
With the support of Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Film- und Medienstiftung NRW, Danish Filminstitut, Norwegian Film

Institute, Nordisk Film & TV Fond, Filmstandort Austria, Aide aux nouvelles technologies du CNC, Fritt Ord, Dreyers Fond, Media Programme of the European Union
Produced in association with DRK, NRK, UR, SBS, Yes Docu, Madman Entertainment, Against Gravity
Funded by Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg, Fernseh, Media Programme of the European Union, WOWOW, Arte, Film- und Medienstiftung NRW, Danish Filminstitut, Österreichische Filminstitut, ORF Film/Fernseh-Abkommen, Norwegian Film Institute, Nordisk Film & TV Fond, Filmstandort Austria, CNC, NRK, DR, UR, Fritt Ord, Dreyers Fond
Executive Producer

Wim Wenders
The Berlin Philharmonic
Germany 2014
Directed by
Wim Wenders
Produced by
Erwin M. Schmidt
Gian-Piero Ringel
Written by
Wim Wenders
Director of Photography
Christian Rein
Edited by
Toni Froschhammer
Sound Recordist
André Zacher
Production Company
A film by Wim Wenders
voice-over
Meret Becker
The National Library of Russia
Austria 2014
Directed by
Michael Glawogger
Produced by
Tommy Priding
Peter Wirthensohn
Written by
Michael Glawogger
Director of

Photography
Wolfgang Thaler
Edited by
Monika Willi
Music
Wolfgang Mitterer
Sound Recordist
Paul Oberle
Production Company
A Lotus-Film production
A film by Michael Glawogger
voice-over
Gennadi Vengerov
Halden Prison
Denmark 2014
Directed by
Michael Madsen
Produced by
Anne Kohncke
Signe Byrge Sørensen
Written by
Michael Madsen
Director of Photography
Wolfgang Thaler
Edited by
Janus Billeskov Jensen
Composer
Karsten Fundal
Sound Artist
Øivind Weingaarde
Production

Companies
A Final Cut for Real production
A film by Michael Madsen
Developed with the support of the Danish Film Institute
voice-over
Benedicte C. Westin
The Salk Institute
USA 2014
Directed by
Robert Redford
Produced by
Laura Michalchysyn
Sidney Beaumont
Written by
Anthony Lappé
Director of Photography
Ed Lachman
Edited by
Jim Helton
Music
Moby
Sound Mixers
Sam Vlahovich
Andy Bollas
Will Hansen
Production Companies
A Sundance Productions,

RadicalMedia production
A film by Robert Redford
Executive Producers
Robert Redford
Jon Kamen
Justin Wilkes
The Oslo Opera House
Norway 2014
Directed by
Margreth Olin
Produced by
Maria Ekerhovd
Written by
Margreth Olin
Bjørn Olaf Johannessen
Director of Photography
Øystein Mamen
Edited by
Michał Leszczyłowski
Sound Recordist
Andreas Lindberg
Svensson
Production Company
A Mer Film production
A film by Margreth Olin
voice-over
Margreth Olin

Centre Pompidou
France 2014
Directed by
Karim Ainouz
Produced by
Charlotte Uzu
Voice-over
Deyan Sudjic
Director of Photography
Ali Olcay Gözkaya
Edited by
Toni Froschhammer
Music
Al Laufeld
Sound Recordist

André Rigaut
Production Company
A Les Films d'Ici 2 production
A film by Karim Ainouz
voice-over
narrated by
Deyan Sudjic
Black and White and Colour
[1.85:1]
Some screenings

presented in 3D
Distributor
Metrodome
Distribution Ltd
Full on-screen title
Cathedrals of Culture A Film Project in 3D about the Soul of Buildings

A portmanteau documentary comprising six short films about significant buildings. Wim Wenders's opening segment visits the Berlin Philharmonic and relates its history as a symbol of the survival of culture. Michael Glawogger accompanies his film on the Russian National Library with a voiceover drawing together diverse scraps from the literature housed in that building. Michael Madsen shoots Halden Prison in Norway. Robert Redford's segment uses interviews, archive and new footage to document the history of the Salk Institute in California. Margreth Olin directs a portrait of the Oslo Opera House, and Karim Ainouz imagines the private responses of Paris's Pompidou Centre to the comings and goings of visitors and staff.

A Dangerous Game

United Kingdom 2014
Director: Anthony Baxter
Certificate PG 101m 37s



Risky galore: Alec Baldwin

Reviewed by Hannah McGill

Following up his own 2011 film *You've Been Trumped*, which detailed the struggle between real-estate tycoon Donald Trump and the locals of Balmedie, Aberdeenshire, over the construction of a luxury golf resort in the area, Anthony Baxter here revisits the community as Trump announces plans for a second development. The filmmaker also promotes *You've Been Trumped* around the world and as a result becomes aware of parallel struggles over golf developments in other countries, including one in Dubrovnik, where opposition is summarily ignored by the city's startlingly unsympathetic mayor.

Golf-centred luxury developments are positioned as a symbol of callous exploitation of natural resources by the 'one per cent', in wilful ignorance of the needs and wishes of the '99 per cent' – to borrow the language of the Occupy movement, referenced here as friends to Baxter's campaign. Crucially, it's also pointed out that these projects often fail to deliver the promised bounty at all: Baxter visits a development in Las Vegas that has fallen foul of the financial crisis and become a ghost town, and notes the collapse of a planned Dubai resort that was to be designed, in exchange for a princely sum, by Tiger Woods.

Baxter delivers some good shock moments – most memorably the sight of the 90-year-old mother of Balmedie farmer and Trump nemesis Michael Forbes having to fetch and carry her water from a stream because the Trump corporation has failed to reconnect her supply – and has a particularly articulate interviewee in the form of US environmental lawyer and activist Robert F. Kennedy Jr. In common with many a campaigning documentary, however, *A Dangerous Game* sets up an argument and then rephrases it in various ways without complicating it, which makes it a slightly flat viewing experience. The pacing can feel sluggish, with altogether too much time given to following well-meaning activists around Dubrovnik; and the final interview with Trump to which the whole thing builds is a bit of a damp squib.

Baxter clearly enjoys putting himself centre-stage in the manner of his supporter Michael Moore, but in terms of the organisation of his material he can't quite match Moore's feel for drama or variance of tone. And it's a real shame that he couldn't get anyone from the Scottish government to speak about its distinctly passive and money-dazzled part in the Trump affair, given the promises of a more socially just and equal Scotland with which referendum voters have lately been regaled by the SNP.

This film is as stirring as it hopes to be in terms of demonising the selfish, blinkered super-rich ("Anything can be spun in a certain way," says Donald Trump Jr, defending his environmental credentials over a montage of photographs of him bearing the trophies of big-game hunting trips). But it lacks nuance in terms of developing this sort of splashy material into a real discussion of how big business, small communities and the wider financial and physical ecology might be pressed or persuaded to coexist. ⚡

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by Richard Phinney	©Montrose Pictures Ltd	assistance: BBC
Written by Richard Phinney	Production Companies Montrose Pictures	In Colour
Cinematography Anthony Baxter	Montrose Pictures presents a film by Anthony Baxter	Distributor Montrose Pictures
Edited by Anthony Baxter	Supported by the National Lottery through Creative Scotland	
Original Score Dominic Glynn	Additional development	
Sound Designers Mikael Frithiof Ulf Blomqvist		

A documentary by filmmaker Anthony Baxter about opposition to American billionaire Donald Trump's plans to build a golf resort in Aberdeenshire, and to other such projects worldwide.

Farmer Michael Forbes receives mail from the US, congratulating him on his resistance to the building of the Trump resort. Having destroyed local sand dunes of scientific and ecological interest to build a first golf course, Trump now plans a second. Baxter's previous exposé of Trump's methods, *'You've Been Trumped'*, is released, and receives international attention. Baxter encounters a parallel scenario in Dubrovnik, where overwhelming local resistance to a planned golf development is ignored by the local mayor. Baxter visits the Mojave desert and East Hampton, where luxurious golf 'communities' are irrigated with billions of gallons of local water and treated with vast quantities of pesticides.

Back in Scotland, Forbes receives a 'Top Scot' award sponsored by Glenfiddich whisky; Trump responds by banning Glenfiddich from his hotels. The Scottish Parliament rejects calls for a public enquiry into Trump's plans and practices. Forbes, with no water supply to his property, seeks the intervention of Alex Salmond, First Minister for Scotland and local MSP for Trump's planned development, but gets an inconclusive response. Trump appears at Holyrood himself, to complain about the effects of a planned wind farm on the aesthetics of his developments in Aberdeenshire. Trump finally grants Baxter an interview, in which he emphasises the success of his Scottish golf course and the awards it has won. Soon afterwards, his corporation abandons its plans for a second course in Scotland and shifts the project to Doonbeg in Ireland. Trump's Scottish opponents celebrate.

Dolphin Tale 2

USA 2014
Director: Charles Martin Smith
Certificate U 107m 4s

Reviewed by Anna Smith

Inspired by true events, 2011's *Dolphin Tale* wove a fictional human story around the details of Winter, a real rescue dolphin that became the recipient of a prosthetic tail after being injured in a crab trap. It saw a boy discovering the injured Winter and befriending the folk at the small family aquarium that takes her in. This sequel follows the story of Winter and her new dolphin companion, Hope. But, true to life, the aquarium is now portrayed as a huge commercial enterprise, packed with punters and banner-waving Winter fans.

The fact that the success of the first movie is chiefly responsible for this transformation is something that *Dolphin Tale 2*, ironically, can't acknowledge without shattering its own fiction. Highlighting the aquarium's newfound fame also means that the story loses some of the original's parochial charm. Hero Sawyer (Nathan Gamble) is now a minor celebrity rather than the relatable boy loner who ushered the audience into a little-known secret.

Still, the depiction of adolescent issues should chime with the target audience: the now teenage Sawyer is struggling to let go of his childhood, and facing an increasing attraction to girls, including his friend Hazel. But most young fans will show up for the same reason as the aquarium visitors: the dolphins, playing themselves with apparent ease. ⚡

Credits and Synopsis

Producers Broderick Johnson Richard Ingber Andrew A. Kosove Steven P. Wegner	With the participation of the Ontario Film & Television Production Services Tax Credit, the Canadian Film or Video Production Services Tax Credit	Hope themselves, dolphins
Written by Charles Martin Smith Based on characters created by Karen Janszen, Noam Dromi	Executive Producers David Yates Robert Engelman	Dolby Digital/Dolby Atmos/Datasat In Colour [1.85:1]
Director of Photography Daryn Okada	Cast Harry Connick Jr Dr Clay Haskett Ashley Judd Lorraine Nelson Nathan Gamble Sawyer Nelson Kris Kristofferson Reed Haskett Cozi Zuehlsoff Hazel Haskett Morgan Freeman Dr Cameron McCarthy Austin Stowell Kyle Connellan Winter	Distributor Warner Bros Distributors (UK)
Edited by Harvey Rosenstock		
Production Designer David J. Bomba		
Music Rachel Portman		
Sound Mixer Scott Clements		
Costume Designer Hope Hanafin		
©Alcon Entertainment, LLC		
Production Company Alcon Entertainment presents		

Florida, present day. The dolphin known as Winter, recipient of the first prosthetic dolphin tail, is a star attraction at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium. Sawyer, the boy who first discovered Winter, is now a teenager and is working at the aquarium during the summer. He is uncertain whether to accept the offer of a lengthy sailing trip. When dolphin Panama dies, the aquarium is legally required to find Winter a new companion, but the only candidate is declared well enough to be released into the wild. A motherless young dolphin is rescued and named Hope; after several attempts, Winter and Hope bond successfully. Sawyer sets off on the sailing trip.

Draft Day

USA 2014
Director: Ivan Reitman
Certificate 15 110m 11s

Reviewed by Adam Nayman

Despite his long résumé and brand-name surname, Ivan Reitman doesn't have a lot of sophisticated strategies as a director. He's more like a football coach who lets his players decide their own tactics on the field. It's telling that his best and most influential film, *Ghostbusters* (1984), was cobbled together out of the improvisations of *Saturday Night Live* alumni: a kind of proto-Apatow production that has cast a long shadow on several decades of American film comedy.

With *Draft Day*, Reitman has tried for something considerably more precise: a slick, script-driven comedy about an embattled National Football League general manager trying to turn his team around, one lopsided trade at a time. The material is modelled on *Moneyball* (2011), but while Reitman's commercial instincts remain as canny as ever, his slovenly filmmaking is wrong for what's basically a backstage farce. *Moneyball* was crisply paced and edited, with a palpable workplace hum; by contrast, *Draft Day* seems drab and underpopulated. And the people who do pop up amid the officially licensed NFL logos aren't characters but types. The bungling underling (Griffin Newman) who keeps getting chewed out by his co-workers is a close cousin to Jonah Hill's *Moneyball* nerd, but he's also a post-*Office Space* cliché; ditto Frank Langella's bullying team owner and Jennifer Garner's stat-head salary-cap manager, a perfectly coiffed career woman who unabashedly wants it all.

The 'all' in this case is a cosy domestic partnership with Sonny Weaver (Kevin Costner), the GM of the underachieving Cleveland Browns and the father of her unborn child. Reviled in his hometown for firing his now late father from his head coaching post and then nose-diving the team through two gruelling seasons, Sonny is trying to live up to the memory of his dad and the hopes of an entire city, and Costner looks credibly put-upon in the role. Weary resolve



This sporting life: Jennifer Garner, Kevin Costner

has always been right in the actor's sweet spot, and yet it's not quite a fully achieved movie-star performance: that we never doubt that Sonny is going to wheel and deal his way out of a tight spot has less to do with Costner's savvy acting than the screenplay's lazy predictability.

A lot of the dialogue in *Draft Day* is laughably pointed, and this undermines Reitman's attempts at a quasi-documentary texture. The stadiums and television talking heads are authentic – the NFL participated quite enthusiastically in the making of the film – but the things these executive-suite movers and shakers say to each other in the heat of battle are highly unlikely. Time after time, the script asks us to believe that Sonny's front-office rivals are all overconfident idiots, which is less a matter of critique than narrative convenience.

Reitman makes no attempt to satirise the NFL or its myriad problems – from concussions to criminal scandals – and so *Draft Day* finally seems like an extended infomercial for a league whose hype machine is already working overtime. Within this safely sanitised on-screen space, it never feels as if there's anything at stake for Sonny, or for Costner. And if Reitman intended this film about a principled old-school pro saving the day to be a kind of late-career self-portrait, let it be said that self-flattery has gotten him nowhere. Ⓢ

Effie Gray

United Kingdom/Italy 2014
Director: Richard Laxton

See
Development
Tale,
page 14

Reviewed by Trevor Johnston

The rich, dark tones of Victorian interiors have rarely seemed as suffocatingly oppressive as in this subtly effective dramatisation of the ill-fated marriage between leading art critic John Ruskin and his youthful bride, Euphemia ('Effie') Gray. Its legal annulment, on the highly unusual grounds of non-consummation, has long stood as one of the major scandals of the Victorian era, and while it's easy to see the modern appeal of events readable as a female act of defiance against a patriarchal status quo, that Emma Thompson's screenplay should also find a degree of understanding for the errant Ruskin is one measure of her compassionate insight into the material.

Completed some two years ago, the film's thus far drawn headlines by successfully seeing off two different plagiarism suits (from screenwriter Eve Pomerance and playwright Gregory Murphy respectively), which have delayed its release, but if these travails at the very least point up the ongoing fascination for the Ruskins' life and times, they also perhaps suggests that Thompson's version finds its own distinctive approach. There's great sympathy, of course, for Effie, an inexperienced young woman unable to comprehend why this supposedly great man is so disgusted by her on their wedding night, and driven towards a breakdown by the apparent impossibility of escape from this marital prison. Dakota Fanning's child-woman physiognomy makes her perfect casting in the role, henna-ed hair and high-necked black dresses turning Effie into the very image of a languishing pre-Raphaelite heroine, and while the real Effie wasn't actually the model for Millais' famous painting of the drowning Ophelia, its use in montage here does effectively suggest the insidiously enveloping fate befalling her within the toxic marriage.

To some extent, it's Effie's helplessness which draws our sympathy, but Fanning's performance always keeps the inner fires alive even given the character's gloomy prospects. Moreover, while the screenplay lays out the events in straightforward linear fashion, the indignant reactions of various witnesses to Effie's travails – among them Thompson herself as the waspishly astute Lady Eastlake, wife of the director of the National Gallery, and briskly engaging Robbie Coltrane's no-nonsense Scots physician – build up a cumulative tension; this pays off beautifully during a fraught Scottish country sojourn where Tom Sturridge's Millais works on his portrait of Ruskin and finds himself drawn to his subject's ill-treated spouse. There's a palpable charge in their merest touch of hands, which shows how well director Richard Laxton succeeds in conveying the prim and proper values of a bygone age.

Indeed, what's satisfying about his formal approach is that it never gives the sense these are proto-modern individuals done up in period garb, instead taking pains to situate us in another time, another place where today's rules don't apply. When Effie and Ruskin are travelling back from Scotland to London after their marriage, for instance, there's a wide shot of a steam train held much longer than we'd expect, just part of a transitional sequence ensuring that we register

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by

Ivan Reitman
Ali Bell

Joe Medjuck

Written by

Rajiv Joseph

Scott Rothman

Director of

Photography

Eric Steelberg

Editors

Sheldon Kahn

Dana E. Glauber

Production Designer

Stephen Altman

Music

John Debney

Production

Sound Mixer

Steven A. Morrow

Costume Designer

Frank Fleming

@Summit

Entertainment,

LLC and Odd Lot

Pictures, LLC

Production

Companies

Summit

Entertainment

presents in

association

with OddLot

Entertainment a

Montecito Picture

Company/OddLot

Entertainment

production

An Ivan Reitman film

Executive Producers

Tom Pollock

Michael Beugg

Gigi Pritzker

Bill Lischak

Michael Nathanson

Cast

Kevin Costner

Sonny Weaver Jr

Jennifer Garner

Ali Parker

Denis Leary

Coach Vince Penn

Frank Langella

Anthony Molina

Sam Elliott

Coach Moore

Sean Combs

Chris Crawford

Terry Crews

Earl Jennings

Ellen Burstyn

Barb Weaver

Chadwick Boseman

Vontae Mack

Rosanna Arquette

Angie

W. Earl Brown

Ralph Mowry

Kevin Dunn

Marvin

Arian Foster

Ray Jennings

Brad William Henke

Tony 'Bagel' Bagli

Chi McBride

Walt Gordon

Griffin Newman

Rick the intern

Josh Pence

Bo Callahan

David Ramsey

Thompson

Patrick St. Esprit

Tom Michaels

Timothy Simons

Marx

Tom Welling

Brian Drew

Wade Williams

O'Reilly

Dolby Digital/

Datasat

In Colour

Colour by

Technicolor

Prints by

Deluxe

[2.35:1]

Distributor

Lionsgate UK

Cleveland, the present. Cleveland Browns general manager Sonny Weaver trades a package of future draft picks to a rival team in exchange for the first overall selection in the year's NFL draft – a move that excites team owner Anthony Molina, who wants Sonny to select star college quarterback Bo Callahan, and angers coach Vince Penn, who has his own pet quarterback already on the roster. Also irritated by the news is mercurial defensive back Vontae Mack, who had been hoping to be selected by the Browns. Sonny spends the majority of draft

day trying to justify his decision to all of these interested parties while also trying to spend a quiet moment with his manager Ali Parker, who is also secretly his girlfriend and has just told him that she's pregnant. Sonny begins to have his doubts about Bo's character and, at the last moment, decides to draft Vontae after all. As Bo drops precipitously in the draft order, Sonny is able to leverage another draft pick into a package that restores the team's future prospects. Sonny and Ali finally share a kiss – and the Browns prepare for a winning season.



Hanging at the gallery: Dakota Fanning

the arduousness of getting from one end of Victorian Britain to the other. All of which helps flag up an overall context, where such everyday exigencies go hand in hand with the Ruskin clan's very different moral mindset, shaped by an almost-creepy maternal influence as typically Victorian as the sexual prudishness which characterises John Ruskin's seemingly peculiar attitude to his spouse – and all of it wrapped within an obsessive quest for social ascendancy which of course hints at the difficulties of class mobility at that historical moment.

Shot on fairly modest resources, the film is no lavishly appointed Viscontian recreation of its era, but what impresses is how the writing's deft, economical characterisation creates an engrossing picture of individuals shaped by the attitudes of their time. Though the pre-

Raphaelites challenged the accepted niceties of academic art, Greg Wise's marvellous, multifaceted performance as their champion Ruskin shows a man whose devotion to a certain ideal of classical beauty proves inextricable from a very Victorian sexual prudishness, and whose unyielding work ethic and utter self-absorption are evidently circumscribed by his cossetting parents' single-minded ambitions to elevated social status. Effie's eventual deliverance means their comeuppance, in circumstances that could play as absurd comedy but here prove all the more touching for the recognition that Ruskin, notwithstanding his inexcusable behaviour, is evidently a victim himself. It sets the seal on an impeccably acted, perceptively drawn costume drama of the kind mainstream British cinema continues to do rather well. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Andreas Roald
Donald Rosenfeld
Original Screenplay
Emma Thompson
Director of Photography
Andrew Dunn
Editor
Kate Williams
Production Design
James Merifield
Music

Paul Cantelon
Sound Mixer
Colin Nicolson
Costumes
Ruth Myers

©Sovereign Films/
High Line Pictures
Production Companies
Sovereign Films
presents in
association with High

Line Pictures a Roald/
Rosenfeld production
With the support of
Venezia Opportunità,
Camera di
Commercio Venezia
Executive Producers
Robyn Rosenfeld
Julian Gleek

Cast
Dakota Fanning

Effie Gray
Emma Thompson
Lady Eastlake
Tom Sturridge
John Everett Millais
David Suchet
Mr Ruskin
Julie Walters
Mrs Ruskin
Greg Wise
John Ruskin
Claudia Cardinale
viscountess

Robbie Coltrane
doctor
James Fox
Sir Charles Eastlake
Riccardo Scamarcio
Rafael
Derek Jacobi
Travers Twiss

In Colour
[2.35:1]

Distributor

Metrodome
Distribution

In 1848, Effie Gray, a 20-year-old Scot, travels to London with her new husband, the celebrated art critic John Ruskin. The couple move in with his over-attentive parents, and Effie is distressed when Ruskin rejects her on their wedding night. After Effie makes a favourable impression on Lady Eastlake, wife of the director of the National Gallery, the Eastlakes agree to dine at the Ruskins' house, deemed a major social advancement. The evening becomes an embarrassment, however, when Effie, dosed with laudanum by Mrs Ruskin, has to be cared for by Lady Eastlake, who becomes very solicitous of her condition, arranging for the couple to travel to Venice for a break from their surroundings. While Ruskin buries himself in his work, Effie socialises, and after brushing

off the attentions of her Italian male chaperone realises the extent of her own sexual frustration.

Back in London, Effie declines physically and mentally, though her husband hardly seems to notice. When the couple travel to Scotland so that John Everett Millais can paint Ruskin's portrait, the artist is shocked by his subject's mental cruelty towards his wife; his concern for Effie prompts a chaste emotional attachment between them. When Lady Eastlake learns that the Ruskins' marriage still remains unconsummated, she has a doctor confirm Effie's virginity, then engages a lawyer to serve Ruskin with divorce proceedings on the grounds of impotence. Though Effie and Millais must remain apart until the court case is resolved, their future together seems assured.

The Equalizer

USA/Australia 2014
Director: Antoine Fuqua
Certificate 15 131m 34s

Reviewed by Ashley Clark

When Denzel Washington first teamed up with director Antoine Fuqua for the electrifyingly silly dirty-cop thriller *Training Day* (2001), he waltzed away with an Oscar. The pair's latest collaboration – a lacklustre reboot of 80s TV show *The Equalizer* – represents a significant case of diminishing returns.

Washington plays Robert McCall, an ex-Black Ops badass who now works in a hardware store, dispensing health tips to overweight employees, and spends his evenings in a corner café, which – in a rare considered visual detail – is lit and shot with the feel of a Hopper painting. With his one friend, smart-talking teen sex worker Alina (Chloë Grace Moretz), he shares a dynamic reminiscent of Travis and Iris in *Taxi Driver* (1976). The rather off-putting difference is that McCall's unctuousness about Alina's work is portrayed as moral righteousness rather than the prurient by-product of an addled mind. Nevertheless, these early scenes are directed with a light touch and hint at promising developments.

Unfortunately, the wheels come off almost as soon as the low-stakes plot – something about drug-dealing Russians and bent Boston cops – kicks in. Chief Russian villain Teddy (Marton Csokas) is badly underwritten, while the only discernible subtext seems to lie in the jingoist fantasy that a lone American can marmalise all of Russia. The cocky denouement hints at a franchise; one can only hope for more spark next time around. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Todd Black
Jason Blumenthal
Denzel Washington
Alex Siskin
Steve Tisch
Mace Neufeld
Tony Eldridge
Michael Sloan
Written by
Richard Wenk
Based on the
television series
created by Michael
Sloan, Richard
Lindheim
Director of Photography
Mauro Fiore
Editor
John Refoua
Production Designer
Naomi Shohan
Music
Harry Gregson-Williams
Production Mixer
Tom Williams
Costume Designer
David Robinson
Stunt Co-ordinators

Keith Woulard
Lin Oeding

©Columbia Pictures
Industries, Inc., LSC
Film Corporation
and Village
Roadshow Films
North America Inc./
Village Roadshow
Films (BVI) Limited
Production Companies
Columbia Pictures
presents in
association with
LStar Capital,
Village Roadshow
Pictures an Escape
Artists, Zhiv, Mace
Neufeld production
A film by Antoine
Fuqua
Executive Producers
Ezra Swerdlow
David Bloomfield
Ben Waisbren

Cast
Denzel Washington
Robert McCall

Marton Csokas
Teddy
Chloë Grace Moretz
Teri, Alina
David Harbour
Masters
Haley Bennett
Mandy
Bill Pullman
Brian Plummer
Melissa Leo
Susan Plummer
David Meunier
Slavi
Johnny Skourtis
Ralphie
Alex Veadov
Tevi
Vladimir Kulich
Vladimir Pushkin
E. Roger Mitchell
lead investigator

Dolby Digital/
Datasat
In Colour
[2.35:1]

Distributor
Sony Pictures
Releasing

Boston, present day. Former Black Ops commando Robert McCall works in a hardware store. After he witnesses an assault on Alina, a young sex worker, he finds the Russian gang responsible and slays them. Vladimir Pushkin, the gang's Russia-based overlord, flies his fixer Teddy into Boston to find Robert. Working with corrupt police officers, Teddy identifies Robert via CCTV footage. Robert forces one of the corrupt officers to lead him to the Russians' HQ, and shuts down their operation. The Russian villains arrive at Robert's hardware store but Robert kills them. He flies to Russia and kills Pushkin.

Finding Fanny

Director: Homi Adajania
Certificate 12A 101m 54s

Reviewed by Naman Ramachandran

Finding Fanny, director Homi Adajania's third feature after *Being Cyrus* (2005) and *Cocktail* (2012), is as derivative as they come. Vanessa Redgrave's road trip across Italy to find her lost love from 50 years ago in *Letters to Juliet* (2010) is reworked here as a road trip across Goa to find a lost love from 46 years ago, also after the discovery of a letter. Adajania works in the themes of virgin sexuality and reconnecting with a former beau from *Stealing Beauty* (1996), and deploys too the characters-on-a-journey trope, a recent Indian example of which is *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* (2011).

Tonally, the gears on this journey shift uneasily between farce, whimsy, homily and schoolyard humour, redeemed only by Deepika Padukone's incandescent performance as a not-so-repressed virgin. **S**



Letter of intent: Deepika Padukone, Arjun Kapoor

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Dinesh Vijan
Written by
Homi Adajania
Kersi Khambatta
Director of Photography
Anil Mehta
Editor
Sreekar Prasad
Production Designer
Manisha Khandelwal
Music
Mathias Duplessy
Sound Designer
Nakul Kamte
Costume Designer
Anaita Shroff

Adajania
Production Companies
Fox Star Studios
presents a Maddock
Films production

Cast
Naseeruddin Shah
Ferdie
Dimple Kapadia
Rosalina 'Rosie'
Eucharistica
Pankaj Kapur
Don Pedro
Cleto Colaco
Deepika Padukone

Angie
Arjun Kapoor
Savio Da Gama

In Colour
Part-subtitled

Distributor
20th Century Fox
International (UK)

Pocolim, Goa, India, the present. Angie, a young virgin widow, lives with her mother-in-law Rosie. Angie's former suitor Savio, who moved away on her wedding day, returns to the village. Don Pedro, a famous painter, also moves to the village in search of his next muse, and finds her in the voluptuous form of Rosie. Ferdie, a former sailor, finds a letter he wrote 46 years ago to the love of his life, Stephanie Fernandes (aka Fanny), returned to him unopened.

The five of them set off to find Fanny. During the trip, Angie loses her virginity to Savio and Pedro is accidentally shot dead after painting his portrait of Rosie. The others finally reach Fanny's village, in the middle of her funeral.

Back in Pocolim, there is a double wedding – Savio to Angie and Ferdie to Rosie.

The Giver

USA 2014
Director: Phillip Noyce
Certificate 12A 97m 12s

Reviewed by Kim Newman

Lois Lowry's 1993 novel *The Giver*, an early entry in the 'young-adult dystopia' category, attained bestseller status well before the arrival of the *Hunger Games* and *Divergent* series. A personal project for star Jeff Bridges, who originally envisioned his father Lloyd in the title role, the film arrives in the middle of a cinema cycle initiated by the successors to Lowry's book. It suffers, therefore, from what might be called the John Carter effect: with the marketplace overcrowded by films drawn from imitators, a straight adaptation of a key work risks seeming old hat. As it happens, Lowry's fragile fable is so indebted to the well-established dystopian genre – with especial nods to *Fahrenheit 451* and *Logan's Run* – that its only real claim to originality is the youth of its rebel protagonist. That is moderated here: the book's 13-year-old hero Jonas, becomes 18, with a concomitant beefing-up of the teen-romance and bike-drone action angles in line with adaptations of the *Hunger Games* books.

Director Phillip Noyce takes a risk in visually depicting Jonas's changing worldview as he comes to understand the truth behind the seemingly ideal community in which he lives, where daily drug doses limit not only people's emotional range but also their ability to see colour. A long opening stretch in cool black-and-white represents the limited, bland, meaninglessly polite world he sees before the drugs kick out. Later he has a premonitory glimpse of his friend Fiona's auburn hair, but it's not until he touches birthmarks with Bridges's crusty elder that he gets full-colour dollops of crushingly banal experiences representing the best and the worst of the old world – sunsets, rainbows, a wedding dance, *Citizen Kane*'s sledge, a digest Vietnam War (complete with the female VC sniper from *Full Metal Jacket*), Nelson Mandela. Gradually, as in *Pleasantville* (1998), colour seeps in, and even Fiona starts getting flashes of it... until, in a bizarre cop-out finish, the hero crossing a line on the map triggers a community-wide

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Nikki Silver
Jeff Bridges
Neil Koenigsberg
Screenplay
Michael Mitnick
Robert B. Weide
Based on the book
by Lois Lowry
Director of Photography
Ross Emery
Edited by
Barry Alexander
Brown
Production Designer

Ed Verreaux
Music
Marco Beltrami
Sound Mixer
Nico Louw
Costume Designer
Diana Cilliers
Visual Effects
Method Studios
Mr. X Gotham
UPP
Crazy Horse East, Inc.
The Molecule
Ensemble
©The Giver SPV, LLC/

Walden Media LLC
Production Companies
The Weinstein Company and
Walden Media present a Tonik/
As Is Productions production in
association with
Yucaipa Films
Produced with the
assistance of the
Department of
Trade and Industry
South Africa

Executive Producers
Bob Weinstein
Harvey Weinstein
Dylan Sellers
Ron Burkle
Alison Owen
Ralph Winter
Scooter Braun
Film Extracts
Baraka (1992)
Samsara (2011)
Life in a Day (2011)

Cast
Jeff Bridges

The Giver
Meryl Streep
Chief Elder
Brenton Thwaites
Jonas
Alexander Skarsgård
father
Katie Holmes
mother
Taylor Swift
Rosemary
Cameron Monaghan
Asher
Odeya Rush
Fiona
Emma Tremblay

Lilly
Dolby Digital/ Datasat
In Colour and Black and White
[2.35:1]

Distributor
Entertainment Film
Distributors Ltd

America, the future. In the Community, a planned society on a mist-shrouded plateau, daily drug doses limit the emotional range (and colour vision) of inhabitants. A council of elders strictly controls each individual's profession and even family ties.

At the ceremony of work assignment, 18-year-old Jonas is given the unusual position of Receiver of Memories. He forms a psychic link with a reclusive elder, who becomes the Giver, and learns about the horrors but also the joys that have been eliminated from the Communities. Jonas sees that his society is based on the ruthless euthanasia of the old and



Memory bank: Brenton Thwaites, Odeya Rush

rush of suppressed communal memories and all the palette is crayoned in. If 'YA' has struggled as a category to be taken seriously, notions like a dystopia with a handy reset button the hero only has to press once for everything to be solved are to blame, and no amount of heroic music and earnest woolly thinking can compensate.

In contrast to *The Hunger Games*, let alone *The Handmaid's Tale*, this is a dystopia that plays to the current fears of the far right – with Meryl Streep (a Big Brother version of Hillary Clinton) and Katie Holmes (chilly mom) embodying what conservatives mean by 'feminazi': mandatory post-natal abortion, the elimination of religion, universal healthcare that primarily manifests in euthanasia, solar power and bicycles for all, politically correct vocabulary-policing ("Use precise language"), centrally controlled full employment and pot-plants in every holding cell. Though the ambiguity was overridden in sequels, the novel's finish – in which Jonas comes to a Christmas-light-festooned home and hears music from inside – can be interpreted as a vision that comes with the last stages of hypothermia. The film has to make this literal, which raises all sorts of questions about who lives in the Christmas-card home outside what seems to be a last surviving enclave of humanity and why they are singing 'The Holly and the Ivy' all year round. **S**

some newborns. Horrified that Gabriel, an undersized baby who has been taken into his house, is due to be disposed of, Jonas steals a motorbike and flees the plateau. He is pursued by drones but his drone pilot friend Asher lets him escape, whereupon he finds himself struggling through burning deserts and snowy mountains. Jonas's friend Fiona has started seeing the world as he does and is targeted for 'release' by lethal injection. Jonas crosses a barrier, triggering a general return of suppressed memories. This halts Fiona's execution. Jonas and Gabriel find a house that Jonas has seen in the Giver's memories.

Gone Too Far!

United Kingdom 2013
Director: Destiny Ekaragha
Certificate 12A 87m 20s

Reviewed by Lisa Mullen

This well-meaning comedy about South London life is a curious mixture of observant social commentary and the broadest of sitcom farce. It focuses on two brothers, Yemi (Malachi Kirby) and Ikudayisi (O.C. Ukeje). Yemi has spent his whole life in Peckham and, like most teenagers, believes that dressing, speaking and acting cool is of the ultimate importance. Iku is fresh off the plane from Nigeria and can't understand why Yemi is so embarrassed by his socks-and-sandals style statement and his strong accent. What Iku doesn't realise is that Yemi has internalised an anti-African prejudice promulgated by neighbourhood bullies like Razer (Tosin Cole), who comes from a West Indian background, and his girlfriend, the beautiful Armani (Shanika Warren-Markland), on whom Yemi, naturally, has a hopeless crush. When Armani chooses to bestow her attentions on Yemi for a while in order to make Razer jealous, he is fooled into believing that her interest is genuine; all he has to do to win her over is ditch the all-too-African Iku as fast as possible.

Writer Bola Agbaje has adapted her own play for the screen, but although she has kept the authenticity of the script's youthful London voice, the transition has not been entirely successful. At the Royal Court, the play's episodic structure was given texture by segments of choreography, but as straight cinema this balance is lost and the relentless series of two-handed scenes (between Yemi and Iku, Yemi and Armani, Armani and her sidekick Paris and so on) soon become repetitive. It's a problem that shows the inexperience, too, of debut director Destiny Ekaragha, who does well to bring out the visual character of Peckham, and uses locations such as the architectural-award-winning library to good effect, but tends to lose coherence and control of pacing along the way, as if nervous of allowing the story to develop its own momentum.

There are some decent performances, especially from Ukeje, a rising star of Nollywood whose charisma stands out a mile, and Kirby, who carries off his character's dislikeable



Peckham wry: Malachi Kirby, Golda John

shallowness with a good dose of boyish charm. For the rest of the cast, including Warren-Markland and Adelayo Adedayo (who plays Armani's meek sidekick Paris), the pickings are pretty slim, since their characters remain largely one-dimensional – disappointing in a piece written and directed by women.

Still, it's unusual to find a portrayal of mostly non-white urban life that doesn't fall back on the gritty stereotypes of crime and violence. Instead, the central themes are family, loyalty and doing the right thing. And by focusing on the tension between African and West Indian heritage, the film swerves another cliché, bypassing the well-worn subject of white-on-black racism in favour of a more nuanced and up-to-date question about bigotry and identity. Sadly, such probing gets lost amid the overblown posturing and predictable set pieces that the film too often relies on: a pity, since its ideas and ambitions are very promising. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Christopher Granier-Deferre
Written by
Bola Agbaje
Based on her play
Director of Photography
Stil Williams
Editor
Anna Dick
Production Designer
Laura Tarrant-Brown
Music Written by
Ben Onono
Rhys Adams
Sound Recordist
Ronald Bailey
Costume Designer
Rob Nicholls

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Production Companies
Verve Pictures and the BFI present

a Poisson Rouge Pictures production
Developed with the British Film Institute and developed with the support of Film London, BBC Films and Skillset through Film London's Microwave Scheme
Made with the support of the BFI's Film Fund

Cast
Malachi Kirby
Yemi
O.C. Ukeje
Ikudayisi
Shanika Warren-Markland
Armani
Adelayo Adedayo
Paris
Tosin Cole
Razer
Miles McDonald

Ghost
Golda John
mum

In Colour
[1.85:1]

Distributor
Verve Pictures

London, present day. When Peckham-raised teenager Yemi learns that his much older brother Ikudayisi has finally obtained a visa and is coming over from Lagos to join the family, he is far from pleased. Not only will he have to share his room with a stranger, but his romantic plans to woo the beautiful Armani look like being derailed. Iku indeed proves an instant embarrassment: his strong Nigerian accent and unfashionable clothes make the insecure Yemi so uncomfortable that even a trip to the shops to buy okra for their mother becomes a social minefield.

Armani is feigning interest in Yemi in order to make her boyfriend Razer jealous. She makes it clear that she doesn't like Africans and Yemi is desperate to hide his heritage from her by shaking off his brother as soon as possible. However, Iku's lack of local knowledge puts him in danger and Yemi is finally forced to team up with him: Iku in turn helps him escape a potential confrontation with local gangsters. Eventually, Iku's straight-talking innocence and pride in his identity show up the shallowness of the anti-African prejudice that Yemi fears, and he realises that Armani's mousy but honest friend Paris is much more his type.

Human Capital

Italy/France 2013
Director: Paolo Virzi
Certificate 15 110m 52s

Reviewed by Pasquale Iannone

Relaxing in a white robe after a game of tennis at the villa of hedge-fund manager Giovanni Bernaschi (Fabrizio Gifuni), estate agent Dino Ossola (Fabrizio Bentivoglio) tells a group of fellow investors that his father used to have a saying – that society can never be without two things: houses and coffins. It seems like a throwaway line, but the words themselves, and how and where they're delivered, cut to the very heart of Paolo Virzi's icy Chabrolian drama, winner of several prizes at this year's David di Donatello awards (the Italian Oscars). Virzi and fellow screenwriters Francesco Bruni and Francesco Piccolo loosely adapt Stephen Amidon's 2004 source novel and move the action from Connecticut to the Lombardy region of Italy, the setting for another recent tale of the Italian bourgeoisie, Luca Guadagnino's *I Am Love* (2009).

Human Capital revolves around a hit-and-run accident, and the narrative – recalling Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Amores perros* (2000) in terms of structure – is broken down into four chapters. The first three focus on individual characters (Dino, his daughter Serena, Giovanni's wife Carla), while a final chapter acts as a more objective postscript. The title refers to insurance companies' monetary assessment of a human life, based, as the film says, on "life expectancy, money-making potential and quality and quantity of emotional ties". In the case of the hit-and-run victim, a waiter named Fabrizio Lupi (Gianluca Di Lauro), the sum is given very precisely as €218,976. It might seem odd that Virzi doesn't dedicate a chapter to Fabrizio's story, but the character's sidelining serves to bolster the critique of the monied classes.

The film features a strong ensemble cast anchored by superb performances from female leads Valeria Bruni Tedeschi



Rising damages: Valeria Bruni Tedeschi

◀ (Carla) and newcomer Matilde Gioli (Serena). The Asian-tinged score from the director's younger brother and regular collaborator Carlo Virzi includes instruments such as the koshi chime and the shakuhachi flute. Allied to DP Jérôme Almérás's crisp widescreen images, it powerfully evokes a world of glacial 'I'm all right Jack' capitalism. 🍷

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Fabrizio Donvito
Benedetto Habib
Marco Cohen
Screenplay
Francesco Bruni
Francesco Piccolo
Paolo Virzi
Freely adapted
from the novel by
Stephen Amidon
Cinematography
Jérôme Almérás
Editing
Cecilia Zanuso
Art Direction
Mauro Radaelli
Original Music
Carlo Virzi
Sound
Roberto Mozzarelli
Costumes
Bettina Pontiggia

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Company Srl,
Manny Films
**Production
Companies**
Indiana Production
Company, Rai
Cinema and
Motorino Amaranto
present an Indiana
Production
production with

Rai Cinema in
co-production with
Manny Films
With the support
of Ministero
dei Beni e delle
Attività Culturali
e del Turismo
In association with
B Media Export,
Backup Media,
Credito Valtellinese
With the support
of Eurimages,
Regione Lazio

Cast

**Valeria Bruni
Tedeschi**
Carla Bernaschi
Fabrizio Bentivoglio
Dino Ossola
Valeria Golino
Roberta
Fabrizio Gifuni
Giovanni Bernaschi
Luigi Lo Cascio
Donato Russomanno
Giovanni Anzaldo
Luca Ambrosini
Matilde Giori
Serena Ossola
Guglielmo Pinelli
Massimiliano
Bernaschi

Gigio Alberti
Giampi
Bebo Storti
Inspector Ranucci
Paolo Pierobon
Uncle Davide
Silvia Cohen
Adriana Crosetti
Gianluca Di Lauro
Fabrizio Lupi,
waiter on bike

**Dolby Digital
In Colour
[2.35:1]
Subtitles**

Distributor
Arrow Film
Distributors Ltd

Italian theatrical title
Il capitale umano

Brianza, Italy, 2010. A cyclist is knocked down in a hit-and-run accident after finishing a waiting shift at a school prize-giving. The events surrounding the accident are retold from the perspectives of Dino Ossola, Carla Bernaschi and Dino's teenage daughter Serena.

Dino invests money in the hedge fund of Carla's wealthy husband Giovanni. Carla persuades her husband to invest in the restoration of a local theatre. At a meeting to discuss the restoration, she meets teacher Donato Russomanno, with whom she later has a fling. When Giovanni gets into financial trouble, Dino loses his investment and Carla's restoration plans are abandoned. The police suspect the Bernaschis' teenage son Massimiliano of being involved in the hit-and-run.

Serena has split up with Massimiliano but the two remain friends. She meets Luca, an artistically gifted young man from a far less privileged background, and falls passionately for him, though she is still called on to support Massimiliano at the prize-giving. As soon as the ceremony is over, she races to be with Luca but is then summoned to help a drunk Massimiliano get home from a party. She drives Massimiliano home; Luca drives Massimiliano's SUV back to the Bernaschis but on the way knocks down the cyclist. Tormented by guilt, he attempts suicide. Dino sees an email written by his daughter to Luca, in which she reassures him that she will never reveal the truth. Dino makes a deal with Carla: he will pass Serena's email to the authorities, exonerating Massimiliano, in exchange for the return of his investment.

Some months later, Luca is visited in prison by Serena. He will be released the following autumn. The family of the cyclist – who has died from his injuries – receives a six-figure payout from Massimiliano's car insurer.

If I Stay

USA 2014

Director: R.J. Cutler

Certificate 12A 106m 33s

Reviewed by Lisa Mullen

Based on Gayle Forman's 2009 young-adult novel, this manipulative tearjerker is pure teen wish-fulfilment, so mushy it can barely stand up. Mia (Chloë Grace Moretz) goes out for a winter drive with her parents the day before she's expecting the results of her audition for the Juilliard conservatory. When the car crashes, Mia wakes up as a sort of ghost, able to see her own body and watch what's going on around her, but invisible to everyone else. As she looks back on her life and decides whether she wants to wake up from her coma, the film seems to promise thoughtful insights along the lines of *A Matter of Life and Death* or *It's a Wonderful Life*, but then throws the premise away: Mia's life is so perfect, and her survival so obviously assured, that there's no sense of jeopardy involved in her flashback trips down memory lane.

The only putative source of tension is a fight she has recently had with her boyfriend Adam (Jamie Blackley), who broke up with her because he resented her Juilliard plans. It's the only tiny fly in the ointment of her otherwise flawless life: blessed with beauty and prodigious musical talent, she comes from a warm and supportive family, with a cute kid brother (Jakob Davies) and parents who, though former rockers, now rebel only in their choice of knitwear. Played with considerable charm by Joshua Leonard and Mireille Enos, the grown-ups are potentially the most interesting characters in the piece, but since there's no room for emotional texture in this saccharine set-up, their only job is to smile a lot and be generally ideal. Naturally they adore Adam, who is in a rock band himself, and indeed – up until their spat – he has been consistently impeccable boyfriend material. The suggestion that he has somehow brought Mia out of her shell is never really backed up – she's a bit shy but this hardly accounts for the apparently universal diagnosis that she is pathologically solitary – and makes the trajectory of her relationship with Adam feel slightly pointless. It's this kind of lazy characterisation that sabotages any attempt to



Out of tune: Jamie Blackley, Chloë Grace Moretz

create an authentic dilemma for the comatose Mia. Can she bear to go on when her family are all dead? Of course she can, what with her adorable Gramps (Stacy Keach), her now contrite boyfriend and her glittering future all in the bag.

I was accompanied to the screening by two 14-year-old girls, presumably the target audience for the film, and they came out dry-eyed and unimpressed. "Cliché, much?" they agreed with an impressive display of eye-rolling. Fatally, they disliked Mia for being "too perfect"; what use is a fantasy if you can't relate to it? "It probably makes me a bad person," one of the girls concluded, "but I think it would have been more interesting if she'd died." 🍷

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Alison Greenspan
Screenplay
Shauna Cross
Based on the novel
by Gayle Forman
**Director of
Photography**
John de Borman
Editor
Keith Henderson
Production Designer
Brent Thomas
Music
Heitor Pereira

Sound Mixer
Shane Connelly
Costume Designer
Monique Prudhomme

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Entertainment Inc.
and Metro-Goldwyn-
Mayer Pictures
Inc. (the universe
excluding MGM
retained territories)
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Mayer Pictures Inc.
and Warner Bros.

Entertainment Inc.
(MGM retained
territories)
**Production
Companies**
New Line Cinema
and Metro-Goldwyn-
Mayer present a
Di Novi Pictures
production
With the participation
of British Columbia
Film and Television Tax
Credit, Canadian Film
or Video Production

Services Tax Credit
Executive Producers
Denise Di Novi
Brad Van Arragon
Gayle Forman

Cast
Chloë Grace Moretz
Mia Hall
Mireille Enos
Kat Hall
Joshua Leonard
Denny Hall
Stacy Keach

Gramps
Jamie Blackley
Adam
Liana Liberato
Kim Schein
Gabrielle Rose
Gran
Jakob Davies
Teddy Hall
Ali Milner
Liz

**Dolby Digital/
Datasat
In Colour**

[2.35:1]

Distributor
Warner Bros
Distributors (UK)

US, present day. Young cello prodigy Mia seems to have a perfect life ahead of her: she has a supportive family, a handsome boyfriend on the verge of rock stardom, and the prospect of a place at the prestigious Juilliard conservatory. But when a car crash puts her in a coma, she experiences an out-of-body experience that makes her reassess her life. Invisible to everyone else, she is able to see her own body in the intensive-care unit and wander the corridors of the hospital, listening to what others are saying about her. She learns that her parents were killed in the accident, and later

discovers that her brother too has died. Reviewing her recent life in flashback, she remembers her journey to musical virtuosity, and how her relationship with boyfriend Adam foundered because of the clash of their ambitions – he resented her wanting to move to New York, despite spending long periods away following his own musical dreams. Mia is so heartbroken by the loss of her family that she almost wants to die but is finally persuaded to fight for life by the love of her friends, grandparents and Adam, who tells her that he will move to New York to be with her when she goes to Juilliard.

Jack to a King The Swansea Story

United Kingdom 2014
Director: Marc Evans
Certificate 12A 99m 2s



Bail of the century: Jack to a King

Reviewed by Trevor Johnston

The title of this affectionate documentary doesn't exactly make it clear but the long-suffering fans of Swansea City football club are known as 'Jacks', and although at the time of writing the team is flying high in the English Premiership, the film acts as a reminder that this state of affairs was certainly not always the case. Given the partisan nature of football loyalties, some might question the potential audience reach of a feature doc about South Wales's finest, but the extraordinary story of the club's most recent decade – which plays out like a cross between *Roy of the Rovers* and a vintage Ealing comedy – is surely one to gladden the hearts of the sport's

truest fans. That a club that was once sold for a mere £1, and was a losing scoreline away from expulsion to non-league status on the final day of the 2002/03 season, should now be keeping company with game's multimillionaires is almost the stuff of fairytales, yet Carmarthen-born director Marc Evans's film brings out the heartening reality that it's the supporters themselves who've played a key part in bringing the whole operation back from the brink.

There's a certain bumbling comedic quality to the unfolding events, relayed through newly shot talking-head interviews and archive material, after businessman Tony Petty, having bought the club for a single pound, tries to keep it afloat by sacking all the best players and using the gate receipts to pay the remaining staff in bags of change. Shades of *The Titled Thunderbolt* ensue when the fans put their hands in their pockets to fund a supporters' trust, and a quartet of benefactors (including a Dutch fan who was once a schoolboy pen pal with the secretary, and a diehard who mortgages his house to put in his stake) eventually persuade him to sell on – cue an amusing reconstruction of a late-night hotel rendezvous involving £20,000 cash in a supermarket plastic bag. While the participants admit they barely knew what they were letting themselves in for, these ostensible amateurs have proved remarkably astute stewards, building a shiny new increased-capacity stadium as well as talent-spotting managers including former Swansea midfielder Roberto Martínez and the then-unheralded Brendan Rodgers (who have gone on to succeed at Everton and Liverpool respectively).

Evans's film registers due respect for their role in the club's subsequent ascending fortunes without getting self-congratulatory about it, and brings just enough visual variety (some split-screen here, a dash of black-and-white there) to stop it all getting too televisual, mustering a genuine sense of scale with imposing aerial shots of the big day at the Wembley Championship play-off. From a director whose early features *Resurrection Man* (1998) and *My Little Eye* (2002) suggested a cutting-edge talent in the making, perhaps it's slightly formally unadventurous. But Evans has always had time for his Welsh roots (cf the Cardiff musical portrait *Beautiful Mistake*), and this somewhat unlikely footballing tale is absolutely a story worth telling. **Ⓔ**

Jimi All Is by My Side

USA/United Kingdom/Ireland 2013
Director: John Ridley
Certificate 15 117m 59s

Reviewed by Sam Davies

A biopic can only ever be as good as its central performance allows it to be, and in the case of *Jimi: All Is by My Side*, that could have been very good indeed. André Benjamin brings to the role of Jimi Hendrix all the innate pop charisma of his other career as one half of Atlanta hip-hop duo Outkast, as well as an uncanny reproduction of Hendrix's distinctive speaking voice. His diffident cadences, murmurs and giggles are pitch-perfect, if admittedly, over the course of the film, rather one-note. But then the script only calls on Benjamin to hit that same note, in almost every scene. In telling the story not of Hendrix's life but the period that took him from trading water as a session player in Manhattan to the cusp of superstardom via London in the Summer of Love, writer-director John Ridley presents Hendrix as the still point around which women, managers, musicians and a career ebb and flow almost unheeded.

Perhaps the only scene in which Hendrix's pulse is shown to rise above 45rpm is also the most controversial: when he attacks his girlfriend Kathy Etchingham (played by Hayley Atwell) in a vicious, jealous rage. Hendrix biographer Charles Cross and Etchingham herself have denied that Hendrix was ever violent towards women. Ridley would presumably point to creative licence (and the reality of the rank misogyny that lay beneath much of the wider counterculture's rhetoric). But it's the kind of wrangle that shows how flawed this genre of film can be, wanting to enjoy the flexibility of fiction but still retain the heft of historical truth. It shows, by contrast, the formal integrity of the approach of Donald Cammell's *Performance* (1970) or Gus Van Sant's *Last Days* (2005) – films that, rather than invoke names or lay claim to the factual, create mirrored halls in which the lives of rock musicians in Notting Hill or the Pacific Northwest are reflected and refracted.

Ridley's direction makes modest attempts at achieving Boorman-via-Soderbergh effects in the way he occasionally shuffles the sequence of sound, picture and silence, and flashes back to a key experience with LSD that Hendrix has in the company of Linda Keith. But, moored in a period-drama mentality, Ridley finds himself forced to put in a call to the Madame Tussauds Casting Agency, as a string of actors who approximately resemble Eric Clapton, Keith Richards, John Lennon or George



Monterey or bust: André Benjamin

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by Gwenllian Hughes	©YJB Films	Dolby Digital
Director of Photography Catherine Derry	Production Companies YJB Films presents a J2K production	In Colour [1.85:1]
Edited by John Richards	Made with the co-operation of Swansea City AFC	Distributor Miracle Communications
Original Music Mal Pope	Executive Producers Mal Pope Edward Thomas	
Sound Recordists Simon Fraser Michael O'Connor Natalie West		

Using newly filmed interviews and archive footage, this documentary charts the rise of Swansea City AFC from struggling Football League team to success in the Premier League.

In 2001, the team is toiling in League Three, the lowest professional division, and so heavily in debt that it is sold for £1 to businessman Tony Petty, whose draconian cost-cutting methods spur the formation of a Supporters' Trust and an increasingly bitter campaign to oust him. Petty finally accepts an offer from a joint grouping of the Trust and four key benefactors – who buy him out for £20,000 in cash. An appeal for local support doubles the gates in the following season, but although new manager Brian Flynn brings in fresh players, including Spanish midfielder Roberto Martínez, by May 2003 only a home victory on the very last day of the season prevents expulsion to non-league football. This sets a platform for the team's resurrection, however, including the building of a new stadium. Martínez takes over as manager and Swansea become League One champions in 2008, only for him to leave for Wigan the next season. Swansea's success continues under Brendan Rodgers, with a 2011 Championship Final win against Reading. The four benefactors who saved the club join the players' celebrations on the Wembley pitch.

➔ Harrison appear in single-scene (or single-frame) cameos that require not acting but impersonation. As this parade of look-a-bit-likes files past, it feels as if the capital earned for *All Is by My Side* by Benjamin's casting is steadily frittered away. And crucially, without the cooperation of the Hendrix estate, Ridley has been unable to license Hendrix's music. Benjamin is forced instead to mime along to bland pastiches, reminiscent of the learn-to-solo-like-Hendrix CDs given away by guitar magazines. More than once the thought occurs that Ridley would have done better to write around the problem, to have Hendrix's music heard only in background bursts, from radios in other rooms or passing cars. Or more daringly, to have made a film in the mode of *Last Days*, 'around' rather than about Hendrix, with no music at all. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Producers

Sean McKittrick
Jeff Culotta
Danny Bramson
Brandon Freeman
Anthony Burns
Tristan Orpen Lynch
Nigel Thomas

Written by

John Ridley

Director of Photography

Tim Fleming

Film Editor

Hank Corwin

Production Designer

Paul Cross

Music

Waddy Wachtel

Danny Bramson

Sound Mixer

Daniel Birch

Costume Designer

Leonie Prendergast

Production Companies

Open Road Films,

XLrator Media, Darko

Entertainment,

Freeman Film

present a Darko

Entertainment,

Freeman Film,

Matador Pictures,

Subotica production

in association with

Bord Scannán

na hÉireann/The

Irish Film Board

A film written

and directed by

John Ridley

In association

with International

Pictures Four Ltd

Executive Producers

Edward H. Hamm Jr

John Ridley

Film Extracts

London in the

Raw (1964)

Cast

André Benjamin

Jimi Hendrix

Hayley Atwell

Kathy Etchingham

Imogen Poots

Linda Keith

Ruth Negga

Ida

Adrian Lester

Michael X

Andrew Buckley

Bryan 'Chas'

Chandler

Oliver Bennett

Noel Redding

Tom Dunlea

John 'Mitch' Mitchell

Clare-Hope Ashitey

Lithofayne 'Faye'

Pridgeon

Jade Yourell

Roberta Goldstein

Lauterio Zamparelli

Mark Hoffman

Danny McColgan

Eric Clapton

In Colour

[2.35:1]

Distributor

Curzon Film World

The Judge

Director: David Dobkin

Certificate 15 141m 33s

Reviewed by Jason Anderson

Robert Duvall has long enjoyed a steady trade in stubborn, stiff-backed fathers who'd rather chew glass than yield to the feelings of the sons they dominate. The fiercest of all these formidable patriarchs remains 'Bull' Meechum in *The Great Santini* (1979), a take-no-guff Marine pilot who treats his family with as much tenderness as he'd show to a group of runty recruits. But like everything else in this milquetoast blend of courtroom dramedy and male weepie from director David Dobkin, Duvall's small-town judge has precious little of Meechum's bluster or bite. As frosty as his Joe Palmer may be to prodigal son Hank (Robert Downey Jr) in their early encounters, the elder character's soft core is clear well before the inevitable reconciliation.

There's a skin-deep quality too to the cynical comments that are inelegantly used to mark the place from which hotshot city lawyer Hank must grow in order to become the man we know he ought to be. Chastised by a prosecutor for helping guilty people to beat the system, Hank blithely replies: "Innocent people can't afford me." Hank's disdain for his Indiana hometown – which comes complete with the kind of bustling Rockwell-worthy main street that's become largely the preserve of movie fictions thanks to the real-world impact of big-box retailers – gives Downey further opportunities to show his flintier side before the movie smoothes over any edges.

Busy with comedies and action-heavy blockbusters since *The Soloist* (2009), Downey displays a palpable relish in his approach to *The Judge's* meatiest moments. It's too bad the material does him so few favours. Since Hank's skills in the courtroom are never in doubt and the case around which the film revolves largely devoid of juicy revelations, *The Judge* fails to develop much charge as a legal procedural. That's all the more unfortunate given Billy Bob Thornton's sly turn as Hank's equally cunning adversary. Vincent D'Onofrio and Vera Farmiga also deserve



Paternity test: Robert Downey Jr, Robert Duvall

better than their thinly conceived characters.

Most disappointing is how poorly *The Judge* serves Duvall. While it's true that a movie as slight as this could not have withstood the fury of his Oscar-nominated performance in *The Great Santini*, it would certainly have benefited from the nuance he displayed as the taciturn old-timer in Aaron Schneider's *Get Low* (2009). It's tempting to imagine what *The Judge* might've been if the lead role had gone to Jack Nicholson, who was originally offered the part, or Clint Eastwood. But chances are Judge Joe Palmer would always be too ordinary to belong in the pantheon of cinema's greatest crusty geezers. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Producer

Susan Downey

David Dobkin

David Gambino

Screenplay

Nick Schenk

Bill Dubuque

Story

David Dobkin

Nick Schenk

Director of Photography

Tim Fleming

Janusz Kaminski

Edited by

Mark Livolsi

Production Designer

Mark Ricker

Music

Thomas Newman

Sound

Mark Ulano

Costume Designer

Marlene Stewart

Production Companies

Warner Bros.

Pictures presents

in association with

Village Roadshow

Pictures

A Big Kid Pictures/

Team Downey

production

A film by David Dobkin

Executive Producers

Herbert W. Gains

Robert Downey Jr

Jeff Kleeman

Bruce Berman

Cast

Robert Downey Jr

Henry 'Hank' Palmer

Robert Duvall

Judge Joseph

Palmer 'Joe'

Vera Farmiga

Samantha, 'Sam'

Vincent D'Onofrio

Glen Partner

Jeremy Strong

Dale Palmer

Dax Shepherd

C.P. Kennedy

Billy Bob Thornton

Dwight Dickam

Leighton Meester

Carla

Dolby Digital/

Datasat/SDDS

In Colour

[2.35:1]

Distributor

Warner Bros

Distributors (UK)

New York, 1966. Linda Keith, girlfriend of Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards, visits a club and notices the guitar player in a backing group, Jimi Hendrix. Seeing his potential, she buys him a guitar and convinces Animals bassist Chas Chandler to manage him. Jimi agrees to relocate to London. To the frustration of Linda, who has begun to fall in love with him, he quickly becomes involved with another woman, Kathy Etchingham. Despite falling out with Linda, Jimi succeeds in forming a trio, with Mitch Mitchell on drums and Noel Redding on bass, though his lackadaisical approach to recording and performing holds them back. Jimi becomes possessive and attacks Kathy in a fit of jealousy. In shock, she takes an overdose, but recovers. Jimi has meanwhile become involved with another woman, Ida, who introduces him to radical ideas such as Black Power. Jimi meets with Michael X but rejects the latter's confrontational radicalism. Chandler succeeds in getting The Jimi Hendrix Experience booked for the Monterey Pop Festival, giving them a chance to make a major impact on the American scene, but erratic performances put the opportunity at risk. Jimi and Linda reconcile. A triumphant gig secures the Monterey booking. The group flies to America.

Indiana, the present. Successful Chicago lawyer Hank Palmer returns to his hometown for the first time in years to attend his mother's funeral. Though Hank retains a warm relationship with his older brother Glen and mentally impaired younger brother Dale, his return renews hostilities with his father Joe, a judge with a reputation for sternness. On the night after the funeral, Joe leaves the house to go for a drive while the brothers drink at a bar, where Hank flirts with waitress Carla.

The next morning, the family is informed that a criminal who was convicted in a case overseen by Joe was struck and killed on the highway the previous night. Though Joe claims not to remember the evening's events, he is charged with murder. Serving as his father's lawyer, Hank learns that his father has cancer, and that his blackout may be

due to chemotherapy, though Joe is reluctant to give details of his health for fear it may cast doubt on decisions in other cases. Hank grows closer to former girlfriend Sam, who is the mother of Carla; Sam implies that Carla is Hank's daughter.

In court, Hank reveals his father's cancer in order to foster doubt about his mental state and his memories of the night. Joe admits that his guilt over being lenient during his first courtroom encounter with the accident victim – after which the man murdered his girlfriend – prompted his hard stance with Hank. Joe is found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to jail. Sam tells Hank that Glen is Carla's father. During a prison visit, Joe tells Hank how much he admires him as a lawyer. Sometime later, Hank returns for Joe's funeral.

The Kidnapping of Michel Houellebecq

France 2014
Director: Guillaume Nicloux
Certificate 15 96m 28s

Reviewed by Ginette Vincendeau

Starring Michel Houellebecq as himself, Guillaume Nicloux's film stages the writer's fictional kidnapping, one of the lurid hypotheses that circulated when Houellebecq disappeared from view for a few days in September 2011 during a book tour (he was found in Spain, having apparently forgotten about the tour). Like its hero, the film deals in provocation, wry humour and boundary crossing: an offbeat comedy but also a postmodern *mise en abyme*, it plays on the porous frontier between reality and fiction in a variety of ways, not least through its central character/actor.

The film starts in classic docudrama style as we follow the ostentatiously low-key life of 'Michel Houellebecq'. He discusses architecture and decoration in his bland modern flat high up in a Parisian tower block, talks about vegetables and music with neighbours and friends, walks the streets of Paris, hails a taxi (but changes his mind), signs a book for an admirer in the street and comes out of church professing a taste for funeral masses. Dialogue is, or gives the impression of being, improvised, even when delivered by professional actors: for instance, Françoise Lebrun, erstwhile heroine of Jean Eustache's *The Mother and the Whore* (1973), as the piano-playing friend with whom Houellebecq discusses the relative merits of Mozart and Beethoven. All the while, Houellebecq's wilfully unkempt looks, mumbling delivery and shabby garb simultaneously contribute to a surreal sense of ordinariness and proclaim his identity as the 'scandalous' French literary star of the past two decades.

The film changes pace – a little – when Houellebecq is kidnapped by a gang of oddballs: Mathieu (Mathieu Nicourt), Luc (Luc Schwarz) and Max (Maxime Lefrançois), who take him to a forlorn house surrounded by industrial wasteland, which we later learn is in the Loire Valley. Rough-hewn and uneducated, the three men are a stark contrast to Houellebecq in terms of bodily presence, intellect and language. Luc is a hulking thug, Mathieu a free-fighting boxer and Max a bodybuilder. The contrast within the ill-assorted group constitutes the core of the film, since the kidnapping part of the plot is never seriously developed; as Houellebecq points out, the three men seem to have no coherent plan. (When, at the end, the ransom money is delivered, we still don't know, and in fact don't care, who masterminded the heist.) Nevertheless, a 'Stockholm syndrome' relationship develops in a desultory fashion between the writer and the gang, to whom are added Mathieu's parents Ginette (Ginette Suchotzky) and Dédé (André Suchotzky) and, on the margins, a Polish mechanic (Ian Turiak) and a young prostitute, Fatima (Marie Bourjala). Each demonstrates his or her talent: amusing moments include the deadpan Houellebecq engaging in free-fighting moves with Mathieu, contrasting his weedy physique with Max's splendid muscles and ineffectively attempting to learn from Luc how to whistle 'La Marseillaise'.

The Kidnapping of Michel Houellebecq is a talkative film, which may be a weakness outside France. For a French speaker the most compelling aspect of the film resides in the lengthy discussions between Houellebecq, the



Write to silence: Michel Houellebecq

kidnappers and the older couple, exchanges in which class and educational disparities are subtly played out through differences in the command of language. Houellebecq's sophistication and culture are evident throughout but his razor-sharp intelligence also shines through in his ability to discuss anything, including his writing practice and the difference between fiction and poetry, in clear and engaging terms without condescension.

Given the film's droll scenes and at times thought-provoking dialogue, there is a nagging feeling that *The Kidnapping of Michel Houellebecq* is little more than a narcissistic authorial game on the part of both Nicloux and Houellebecq. Nicloux reprises elements of his 2007 film *The Key*, including the actors who play the kidnappers. Houellebecq is supremely adept at recycling his name and image. He staged his own death in his

Goncourt Prize-winning 2010 novel *The Map and the Territory*, has had several novels adapted to film, one of which (*Possibility of an Island*, 2008) he directed, and has acted in a number of films, including this year's *Near Death Experience* directed by Benoît Delépine and Gustave Kervern. Apart from displaying his appearance, elocution and aura, *The Kidnapping of Michel Houellebecq* plays up to the writer's trademark cynicism, and among other things his positive view of prostitution. Nicloux is on record as saying that with this film, he "wanted to focus not on Michel Houellebecq but on Michel Thomas [his real name]", but the profoundly self-referential nature of the film makes this difficult to believe. More to the point, one might wonder how much, outside the French literary hothouse, audiences care about Houellebecq, let alone Thomas. Ⓢ

Credits and Synopsis

Producer

Sylvie Pialat

Screenplay

Guillaume Nicloux

Cinematography

Christophe Offenstien

Editor

Guy Lecorne

Art Direction

Olivier Radot

Sound

Olivier Dô-Huù

Fanny Weinzaepflen

Costumes

Anais Romand

©Les films du

Worso, Chic Films,

ARTE France

Production

Companies

ARTE France presents

a Les films du Worso,

Chic Films, ARTE

France co-production

With the participation

of CNC, Ciné +,

Cinéfeel Prod

With the support of

Procirop - Société

des Producteurs

Cast

Michel Houellebecq

Michel Houellebecq

Maxime Lefrançois

Maxime

Mathieu Nicourt

Mathieu

Luc Schwarz

Luc

Françoise Lebrun

Françoise

Ginette Suchotzky

Ginette

André Suchotzky

Dédé

Marie Bourjala

Fatima

Ian Turiak

In Colour

[2.35:1]

Subtitles

Distributor

Studiocanal Limited

French theatrical title

L'Enlèvement de

Michel Houellebecq

Paris and the Loire Valley, the present. A middle-aged writer named Michel Houellebecq lives in Paris in a tower block. We witness his quiet daily routine, writing a little, occasionally meeting friends and neighbours, signing books. One day, three men kidnap him, transporting him by car to an unknown location. In the hideout, although he is handcuffed and not allowed his own cigarette lighter, the chain-smoking, heavy-drinking Houellebecq is treated well by his abductors, whom we gradually get to know: Mathieu practises free-fight boxing, Luc is a gypsy and Max (possibly the leader) a bodybuilder. These oddballs do not seem to have any clear plan, and we never learn who pays the ransom. The hideout

belongs to Mathieu's elderly parents, Ginette and Dédé.

Over time, a relationship builds between the intellectual Houellebecq, his hapless kidnappers, Ginette and Dédé and the latter's assistant, who speaks only Polish. The group eat together, talk and occasionally argue about a range of topics. Houellebecq receives lessons in free-fighting from Mathieu and bodybuilding from Max; Luc tries to teach him to whistle. In return, Houellebecq discusses writing and composes a poem to Ginette, who supplies him with Fatima, a local prostitute.

A lawyer arrives with the ransom money, leaving Houellebecq to drive off at reckless speed with Luc.

The Knife That Killed Me

United Kingdom 2013
Directors: Marcus Romer, Kit Monkman
Certificate 15 101m 6s

Reviewed by Nick Pinkerton

Juvie drama *The Knife That Killed Me* was shot entirely in York. This is near the scene of the 2008 YA novel by Anthony McGowan on which the film is based but locations weren't a concern: everything was performed in a studio, in front of a green screen. The teenage cast, including Jack McMullen as protagonist/narrator Paul and Rosie Goddard as love interest Maddy, are the only live-action elements in the frame. The young actors are haplessly pinned into crude CG renderings of domestic interiors and school corridors, which in turn are set against black-and-white backgrounds that are a combination of gothic sketchbook etchings and blackboard text displaying school lessons and schoolyard taunts.

The idea, one supposes, could be to present the characters as avatars of themselves in a video game of their own lives. But *The Knife That Killed Me* just looks like a low-budget 1999 music video for a Christian nu metal band. If you can leap this chasm-broad aesthetic hurdle – or if you actually think the gambit works – there may be pleasures on the other side. I must count myself among the fallen, though the walking-in-place effect the actors are called on to perform to 'move' through these environments is good for a couple of chuckles.

The novelty of adapting the novel as a lo-fi contemporary 300 was presumably meant to appeal to the inscribed youth audience; but teenagers are awfully good at spotting weakness and the movie itself is a proper runt. 

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by Alan Latham Thomas Mattinson	Pilot Theatre, Gloucester Place Films, International Pictures Three & Premiere Pictures a film by Marcus Romer, Kit Monkman, Thomas Mattinson	Paul's dad Jamie Shelton Roth Oliver Lee Shane Charles Mnene Goddo Rosie Goddard Maddy Andrew Ellis Bates Kerron Darby Miller Reece Douglas Mickey Tom Collins Tariq
Written by Marcus Romer Kit Monkman Based on the novel by Anthony McGowan	Executive Producers Peter Bates John Mateer Nigel Thomas Charlotte Walls Michael Lionello Boscardi Cowan Sean O'Kelly Jason Garrett David Rogers Cormac A Crawford Stephen Evans Ian Foxley	In Colour [2.35:1] Distributor GSP Distribution
Lighting Director Terry Maskell Edited by Thomas Mattinson Kit Monkman Composer Tom Adams Sound Recordist Will Jefferson Costume Designer Catherine Chapman	Cast Jack McMullen Paul Reece Dinsdale	
©The Knife That Killed Me Ltd Production Companies Green Screen Productions Ltd presents in association with		

Leeds, present day. Paul Varderman, who is 'dead', narrates the events leading to his demise. He begins his story having recently moved to his grandfather's house with his single dad, who grew up in the area, and having just transferred to a new school. Paul is immediately victimised by Roth, the school bully, who pressures him into a dangerous errand, arming him with a knife. Roughed up on his mission, Paul turns instead to the company of the school's 'Freaks', but after one of their number, Maddy, stands him up on a date, he agrees to join Roth in a scrap with a rival gang. In the melee he accidentally stabs and kills one of his Freak friends. It's revealed that the afterlife Paul is speaking from is the purgatorial detention centre he's been confined to.

Life After Beth

USA 2014
Director: Jeff Baena
Certificate 15 88m 54s

Reviewed by Lisa Mullen

Jeff Baena's directorial debut gives a witty indie twist to the well-trodden zombie genre, showing undead goings-on from the perspective of lovesick Zach (Dane DeHaan), whose overwhelming grief for his dead girlfriend Beth (Aubrey Plaza) turns to delight, then horror, when she rises from the grave. It's the same be-careful-what-you-wish-for high concept that was played straight in Fabrice Gobert's 2012 television drama *The Returned* (itself based on Robin Campillo's 2004 zombie film of the same name), but here the idea that a revived corpse would eschew any brain-eating urges in favour of picking up the threads of their old life becomes an archly observed dissection of obsessive love.

Zach is the archetypal angst-y romantic, so enamoured of his own emotional profundity that even an impending zombie apocalypse is reconfigured as mere background to his woes. The film opens with a delightfully sardonic sequence at Beth's funeral, Zach's grief-stricken posturing growing increasingly toe-curling. Even Beth's parents (nicely played by John C. Reilly and Molly Shannon) can't match his extravagant suffering. His own parents – who, of course, Do Not Understand – dismiss it as a silly phase.

DeHaan – fresh from his turn as a cartoon baddie in *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* and clearly destined for great things – plays Zach with a deft comedic touch, laying bare his pretensions but never breaking the fragile thread of our sympathy. His journey towards the realisation that he must let Beth go – a predictable theme in zombie narratives – is nicely complicated here by the suggestion that their affair was on the rocks even before her death. One of the best things about dead-Beth, from Zach's point of view, is that she seems to have forgotten that she had asked him for a cooling-off period and was talking about seeing other people.

Instead, the tables are turned as Beth disintegrates both physically and emotionally. As she becomes more and more repulsively mouldy and explosively bad-tempered, she clings suffocatingly to Zach and wants to dominate

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by Michael Zakin Liz Destro Written by Jeff Baena Director of Photography Jay Hunter Editor Colin Patton Production Designer Michael Grasley Original Score BRMC Production Sound Mixer Devendra Cleary Costume Designer Negar Ali Kline	Kim Leadford Charles Bonan Tim Nye Elizabeth Stillwell Daniel McCarney Chris Hergelegiu Brent Romagnolo Courtney Kivowitz Brian Young Wendy Bengé	Pearline Thomas McDonell Dan Alia Shawkat Roz In Colour [1.85:1] Distributor Koch Media
Cast Aubrey Plaza Beth Slocum Dane DeHaan Zach Orfman Molly Shannon Geenie Slocum Cheryl Hines Judy Orfman Paul Reiser Noah Orfman Matthew Gray Gubler Kyle Orfman John C. Reilly Maury Slocum Anna Kendrick Erica Wexler Eva La Dore	©Life After Beth, LLC Production Companies Starstream Entertainment presents with Abbotita Productions an American Zoetrope and Destro Films production Executive Producers	

his life completely. If he'd once yearned for the grand passion of an all-consuming relationship, he now begins to understand the need for a little personal space. Plaza – best known for the television comedy *Parks and Recreation* – throws herself enthusiastically into Beth's galloping psychosis, though her role necessarily stays more or less on one note, if with increasing amounts of snarling, grunting and putrefaction.

The flatness of Beth's character may make narrative sense but it doesn't help the film's momentum. Indeed, for all its quirky charms, the film's weak point is its structure; it loses focus in the middle act especially, while Zach dithers over what to do. But isolated odd incidents gradually start to impinge on his consciousness, and he becomes aware that Beth is not the only walking corpse in town. The full-blown undead onslaught that only Zach has seen coming finally unfolds in a bit of a rush, via a pointless subplot about a Haitian woman who was recently sacked by Beth's family. In the end, the dawn of the dead is a bathetic business – directorial restraint, perhaps, but it also inevitably suggests budgetary limitations. The finale does, however, give Matthew Gray Gubler – who puts in a scene-stealing performance as Zach's gun-obsessed brother – the chance to flex his self-aggrandising muscles as the head of a local zombie-splating militia.

Baena co-wrote 2004's existential comedy *I Heart Huckabees*, and though the philosophical angle is more muted here, there is a strong sense that he wants his repurposed zombie trope to make a serious point about solipsistic romanticism and the deadening urge to seek perfection in love. It's no accident that, in the worst throes of her zombie breakdown, Beth becomes a kind of demented version of the perfect girlfriend, unswervingly devoted and literally (for everyone's safety) chained to a kitchen appliance. It's metaphorical touches like this that give *Life After Beth* an enjoyably sharp edge and help to compensate for its unevenness. It's not a perfect film but then, as we've learnt, perfection isn't everything. 

Small-town America, present day. Soulful teenager Zach is devastated by the sudden death of his girlfriend Beth. Throwing himself overenthusiastically into the grieving process, he spends as much time as possible with Beth's parents Maury and Geenie, becoming a fixture at their house. He is surprised, therefore, when they suddenly stop taking his calls and answering the door. This mystery rejection is solved when he glimpses Beth, apparently alive, through the window. He is gradually convinced by Maury and Geenie that Beth's resurrection is a miracle that must be concealed from the outside world. He restarts his relationship with her, trying to ignore her strange behaviour, sudden mood swings and amnesia. He is finally forced to admit that she is a zombie when he notices her physically decomposing, and he begins to fear her increasingly violent jealousy and dangerous outbursts. As his passion for her cools, he begins to realise that she is not the only zombie in town. His warnings to his parents and others fall on deaf ears, but eventually a full-blown zombie apocalypse threatens. Zach's brother Kyle gives him a gun and tells him that he must shoot Beth. Reluctantly, he does, as kindly as possible. Returning home, he is relieved to find that the apocalypse has been averted and everything is returning to normal.

Love, Rosie

Germany/United Kingdom 2014
Director: Christian Ditter
Certificate 15 102m 29s

Reviewed by Anna Smith

Like the 2011 film *One Day*, this romance drops in on a pair of friends over many years, asking the age-old question: will they or won't they? But fate seems destined to keep Rosie (Lily Collins) and Alex (Sam Claflin) apart, with obstacles including other lovers and unfortunate timing issues.

Based on the book *Where Rainbows End* by the Irish novelist Cecelia Ahern, *Love, Rosie* makes a virtue of its predictable conclusion: it's just a question of how and when they'll get together. At times it challenges patience but appealing turns from Collins and Claflin help create a couple to root for, and the script has amusing moments, drawing comedy from relatable minor misfortunes of the *Bridget Jones* mould.

But while comic interludes have a down-to-earth credibility, many details don't – from a secret pregnancy to the fact that everyone in Dublin speaks with an English accent. The first English-language film from German director Christian Ditter (*The Crocodiles*), *Love, Rosie* may have believable characters but its plotting is the stuff of fantasy. 📉



London Irish: Lily Collins, Sam Claflin

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by

Robert Kulzer
Simon Brooks

Screenplay

Juliette Towhidi
Based on the novel
Where Rainbows End
by Cecelia Ahern

Director of

Photography

Christian Rein

Editor

Tony Cranstoun

Production

Designer

Matthew Davies

Music

Ralf Wengenmayr

Production

Sound Mixer

Barry O'Sullivan

Costume Designer

Leonie Prendergast

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Produktion GmbH

Production

Companies

Constantin

Film presents a

Constantin Film

production in

association with

Canyon Creek Films

Supported by FFF

Bayern, MEDIA

Executive Producer

Martin Moszkowicz

Cast

Lily Collins

Rosie Dunne

Sam Claflin

Alex Stewart

Christian Cooke

Greg

Tamsin Egerton

Sally

Suki Waterhouse

Bethany Williams

Jamie Beamish

Phil

Jaime Winstone

Ruby

Dolby Digital

In Colour

[2.35:1]

Distributor

Lionsgate UK

Dublin, present day. Best friends Rosie and Alex plan to attend Boston University. They kiss in a club but she is too drunk to remember it. After a fling with schoolmate Greg, Rosie becomes pregnant. She keeps it secret from Alex and he moves to Boston. Rosie has a daughter, Katie, and raises her with family help. She visits Alex, who gets together with Sally, though they later split up. Rosie reunites with Greg. Alex marries Bethany. Rosie is reminded of the drunken kiss. Her father dies. She discovers that Greg has been cheating on her, and also that he kept a love letter to her from Alex. They separate. Rosie buys a country hotel with her inheritance, moving there with her now adolescent daughter. Alex, who has split up with Bethany, visits Rosie and they finally unite.

Manuscripts Don't Burn

Iran 2013
Director: Mohammad Rasoulof
Certificate 15 127m 18s

Reviewed by Michael Brooke

"This story is based on true events," claims an opening title, and one doesn't doubt it for a moment given that Mohammad Rasoulof's fifth feature was made clandestinely and that his is the only onscreen name – a wise move given that any identifiable collaborator still resident in Iran (the principal actors are reputed to be exiles) would be jeopardising their careers and much more. Indeed, Rasoulof's own future is currently in doubt: like his friend Jafar Panahi, he has formally been banned from making films and also from leaving Iran to work abroad – a plight he shares with the writer Kasra, one of his pivotal characters.

But although *Manuscripts Don't Burn* has much to say about the mechanisms of persecution and oppression (far more bluntly than Panahi's wryly euphemistic *This Is Not a Film* and *Closed Curtain*, or indeed any other Iranian film to date), it is primarily a very effective suspense thriller. By the end we have learnt plenty about the back-stories of the major characters – a newspaper editor who is also a senior secret police operative (his name, befitting his slipperiness, is unclear), his goons Morteza and Khosrow and the three writers they're persecuting, Kasra, Kian and Forouzandeh – but this information has been drip-fed on a 'need to know' basis, similar to that under which Morteza and Khosrow operate. Dramatically, this generates regular revelations and twists, the most drawn-out suspense concerning the identity of Morteza and Khosrow's victim, trussed up in the boot of their car. In short, the film works perfectly well as a gripping genre piece.

The crucial difference between this and a Hitchcock entertainment is that the ostensible Macguffin, three copies of Kasra's inflammatory memoirs that the authorities are trying to destroy, is anything but a throwaway plot motor. On the contrary, Kasra's description of an incident in which the authorities crudely tried to murder 21 troublesome intellectuals in a botched coach crash illustrates not only why the newspaper editor wants to obtain the manuscript at all costs (he and Khosrow are personally implicated) but also the real risks that adventurously critical writers (and artists in any medium) operate under to this day.

The film's open discussion of censorship and the activities of the secret police recalls Iron Curtain-era films such as Karel Kachyna's

The Ear (1970) or Andrzej Wajda's *Man of Iron* (1981), both also banned at home for many years. However, the authorities themselves, or at least their representatives here, are hardly paragons of ultra-efficient ruthlessness – Khosrow in particular suffers from financial troubles caused by his son's hospitalisation and what sounds like an awkward debt situation. He's constantly stopping at cashpoints to check his bank balance, a quest that makes those waiting for Godot seem statistically far more likely to meet with success – and this regular re-emphasis of the cash-strapped nature of the operation underscores how far below the official radar he's required to operate.

Despite a vanishingly small production budget, the film is remarkably polished. Framed in Scope, the blue- and grey-toned cinematography is often near-monochrome, highlighting calculated splashes of colour, notably the regular appearance of cleaning products. A motif of washing threads throughout the film, bookended by Khosrow washing his victim's blood off his neck and a nightmare reminiscent of Lady Macbeth's, in which a shower turns progressively bloodier. In between, Khosrow washes a tiger-motif rug following an all too understandable accident in the boot on the part of his victim (two out of the three writers are either temporarily or permanently incontinent, emphasising their vulnerability) and, in an oddly haunting prelude to his ultimate fate, Kasra washes his tainted telephone in the sink. Outwardly innocent household objects get sinister new functions: lacking guns or purpose-designed torture instruments, the editor's enforcers use bin liners, clothes pegs and canary-yellow rubber gloves. Children aren't spared: it's unclear what happens to the underage witness to one of Morteza's crimes but it's unlikely to have been a finger-wagging lecture.

Rasoulof can't resist the occasional temptation along those lines, notably when his middle-aged to elderly writers bemoan the lack of political engagement among the young. But the film is so clearly heartfelt, and its very existence so nearly miraculous, that such quibbles are needlessly nitpicking. The title and much else was inspired by Bulgakov's once similarly clandestine novel *The Master and Margarita*, and though Rasoulof favours low-key realism over the Russian's imaginative grotesquerie, his film is ultimately just as brave. 📈

Credits and Synopsis

Producer

Mohammad

Rasoulof

Screenplay

Mohammad

Rasoulof

In Colour

Subtitles

[2.35:1]

Distributor

Studiocanal Limited

Original title

Dast-neveshtehaa

nemissoand

The film states at the end that in order to maintain the security of cast and crew they will not be mentioned by name

Tehran, the present. Secret police agents Morteza and Khosrow work on a strictly need-to-know basis. Khosrow is preoccupied with his young son's health, and obsessively checks his bank balance to see if he's been paid. The writer Forouzandeh, confined to a wheelchair, asks Kian to arrange for a heavily censored manuscript to be printed privately (and illegally). Both are spied on. After censoring a newspaper column, an editor who is also a senior secret police operative asks Morteza to destroy the writer Kasra's memoirs,

since Kasra has explosive information about his past. Kasra offers the editor his manuscript in exchange for leaving Iran, but lets slip that there are two more copies. Khosrow and Morteza drive to a house in northern Iran, Kian's summer residence. They take Kian out of the boot, torture him and find his copy of Kasra's manuscript. Kasra rings the publisher to complain that he didn't keep his part of the bargain, calls his daughter to say goodbye, then kills himself. Khosrow and Morteza meet the editor in Tehran and they persuade Kian to go to Forouzandeh and obtain his copy of Kasra's manuscript. When Kian hesitates, they push past him, blindfold Forouzandeh, force Kian to drink several glasses of vodka, and then kill Forouzandeh with a poisoned suppository. Khosrow and Morteza drive Kian north, stop at an abandoned building, where Khosrow kills Kian. Khosrow has a nightmare about being unable to wash his victims' blood off him.

The Maze Runner

USA/United Kingdom 2014
Director: Wes Ball

Reviewed by Violet Lucca

Abandon all hope, ye who enter here: this young adult tale of a futuristic dystopia is unredeemable. Lacking the political overtones of *The Hunger Games* or the 'surprise, you're actually Hitler' implications of *Ender's Game*, *The Maze Runner* doesn't let up from its breathlessly delivered exposition and unimaginative action long enough to meditate on any larger themes.

For all its moody posturing, the core of the story is definitely more *The Coral Island* than *Lord of the Flies*: every month, a new kid (with his memory erased) is sent to 'the Glade', a forest and meadow encircled by a high-walled maze. Alby (Aml Ameen) leads this community with a light touch, and everyone does his job well, without any of the sadistic infighting that is usually part and parcel of such an all-male environment. But then Thomas (Dylan O'Brien) instigates change by violating the rules (entering the maze) and successfully killing a Greaver (one of the half-mechanical spiderlike creatures that roam the maze at night). His transgressions rankle Gally (Will Poulter), who quite understandably questions Thomas's connection with whoever's keeping them there; all the other 'Gladers' go along with it in the hopes of escaping. "I don't know if he's brave or stupid but we need more of it," cries Minho (Ki Hong Lee), one of the 'runners' who maps the maze, and who holds the distinction of being the only cute boy in the cast. In a more self-important film, such a defence of a character like Thomas could be read as a tacit approval of G.W. Bush and the first half of the second Iraq War. Here, it comes off as bad sloganeering from an unused Nike campaign, breaking up a few more shots of kids running around an obviously fake CGI maze.

The not-so-interesting twist ending is delivered in the last five minutes by Patricia Clarkson via a pre-recorded video message: the outside world



The right angle stuff: *The Maze Runner*

has been devastated by solar flares and a viral epidemic, and the kids are in the maze so that WCKD (it's unclear whether it's a company or NGO) can study their brain function, in the hope of finding a cure. Expediently solving the mystery of their captivity, Clarkson's summation is grating not for crassly establishing the fact that this is a franchise, but because it sounds like a slightly more interesting movie you *could've* seen instead of watching 95 minutes of kids yelling variations of "run faster" and "shut up" to each other.

Though I haven't read the source novel, many small details (such as the amount of time they've been in the Glade) and key plot points (Gally and Alby's roles, what happens when someone is stung by a Greaver) have been altered, though these changes seem to be totally arbitrary and pointless – perhaps to encourage post-screening internet discussion? *The Maze Runner's* haphazardness also extends to the set design: trapped inside the Glade, the boys supposedly rely on the nature around them and whatever supplies are sent by their captors through the elevator each month, yet all of their huts conspicuously consist of bamboo and palm-tree leaves. Such lack of experimental controls would make B.F. Skinner roll in his grave. **S**

Mr. Turner

United Kingdom/France/Germany 2014
Director: Mike Leigh
Certificate 12A 149m 48s



Reviewed by Kate Stables

See Feature
on page 26

Like Keats, that other impermeably popular British Romantic, J.M.W. Turner has been a man for all artistic seasons. Championed by Ruskin as a supplier of the Sublime, he was later seized on as a proto-impressionist and even as the founding father of abstract impressionism (those vortices of grey paint in *Snow Storm*, the cloudy, briny swirls of his late work). In this rich, ruminative and wonderfully executed character study of Turner in his later years, Mike Leigh, himself a doggedly original creator, depicts his subject (Timothy Spall) as an artist *sui generis* rather than a relentless modernist, but one who also embodies the early-Victorian tug of war between tradition and the steam-speed rush of modernity. Sucking up old and new eagerly, he is as struck by a rushing locomotive or a daguerreotype as he is by regular visits to Dutch old masters. Leigh's taciturn Turner is omnivorous in finding fuel for his art.

The film is unusual among painter biopics in asking the audience to understand Turner chiefly through sharp-eyed episodes from his daily round, trotting from ducal dinners to rivalrous Royal Academy varnishings. Rather than unpacking his interior self via tumultuous relationships like Robert Altman's *Vincent & Theo* (1990) or Julie Taymor's *Frida* (2002), *Mr Turner* shows the artist being doted on first by his aged father (a sly, tender Paul Jesson) and then by guileless Margate widow Mrs Booth. Odd man-and-myth moments occur – a fellow painter noting that the passing Temeraire "would make a good subject", Turner lashed to a ship's mast in a snowstorm like a North Sea Odysseus – but they're served up with wit and brio.

By Leigh's standards, it's a remarkably warm film, and not just in the absence of *Another Year's* well-honed glumness. Suffused with yellow light, Dick Pope's cinematography is cleverly Turner-tinged rather than Turneresque, opening on a glorious Dutch landscape, and teasingly recreating a Petworth watercolour of 'The Artist and his Admirers' to show Turner's creation-as-cabaret painting style. In the manner of Leigh's *Topsy-Turvy* (1999), the film is fascinated by the life of Victorian artists, truffling around after Turner from his spit- and egg-laden canvases to his magnetic solar experiments with scientist Mary Somerville (a fluttery Lesley Manville). This is painting as performance art, lapping up Turner's unnerving creative throes. Art is a compulsion here, a force that finds Turner sketching in a brothel, sobbing with misery after his father's death. One that sends him staggering from his deathbed to draw the corpse of a drowned woman found outside his Chelsea house. There's something very English, too, about the film's eye for the artist's class-hopping, as Turner takes in high-class recitals and Academicians' brawls with equal amounts of gusto.

Spall is simply magnificent, giving a fully realised performance that never sinks into caricature, and that is often extremely moving. Full of grace notes – such as the way his hidden hands clench to express a horror that his voice cannot on hearing of his grown daughter's death – it's a tremendously eloquent portrayal, mostly utilising a huge repertoire of grunts, which

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Ellen Goldsmith-Vein
Lee Stollman
Wyck Godfrey
Marty Bowen
Screenplay
Noah Oppenheim
Grant Pierce Myers
T.S. Nowlin
Based on the novel
by James Dashner
Director of
Photography
Enrique Chediak
Film Editor
Dan Zimmerman
Production Designer
Marc Fischella
Music

John Paesano
Production
Sound Mixer
Paul Ledford
Costume Designers
Simonetta Mariano
Visual Effects
Method Studios
Stunt Co-ordinator
Troy Robinson

@Twentieth
Century Fox Film
Corporation and
TSG Entertainment
Finance LLC (in all
territories except
Brazil, Italy, Japan,
Korea and Spain)

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Corporation and
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Finance LLC (in
Brazil, Italy, Japan,
Korea and Spain)
Production
Companies
A Gotham Group/
Temple Hill production
A Twentieth Century
Fox presentation
Made in association
with TSG
Entertainment and

Dayday Films
Executive Producers
Joe Hartwick Jr
Edward Gamarra
Lindsay Williams

Cast
Dylan O'Brien

Thomas
Kaya Scodelario
Teresa
Aml Ameen
Alby
Thomas Brodie-
Sangster
Newt
Ki Hong Lee

Minho
Will Poulter
Gally
Patricia Clarkson

Ava Paige
Blake Cooper
Chuck
Dexter Darden
Frypan
Jacob Latimore
Jeff
Chris Sheffield
Ben
Joe Adler
Zart
Randall D.
Cunningham
Clint

Alexander Flores
Winston

Dolby Digital
In Colour
[2.35:1]

Distributor
20th Century Fox
International (UK)

The dystopian future. Amnesiac Thomas is delivered via a freight elevator to the Glade, an artificial clearing surrounded by a maze. While assisting his fellow captives with chores, Thomas is attacked by someone who was stung by a Greaver, a mechanical spider. The boy is left in the maze overnight to die. Alby, their leader, and Minho, whose job is to explore the maze, go inside to retrieve his body. Thomas enters the maze to save Minho and Alby, and kills a Greaver. Thomas is punished by Gally for disobeying the rules. Thomas and Minho open a porthole inside the maze using part of a Greaver. Greavers then enter the Glade, killing many. Gally

demands that Thomas be sacrificed to the Greavers, but those supporting Thomas escape through the porthole. This leads them to a research facility that Thomas has seen in dreams. Here, a video explains that the Gladers are immune to a virus that destroyed humanity; they were put inside the Glade so that their brains could be studied in the hope of finding a cure. The woman in the video shoots herself in the head as the facility is raided. Gally tries to kill Thomas but Minho spears him through the heart. The raiders from the video put the Gladers into a helicopter. The woman from the video tells a shadowy group that they can now begin phase two.



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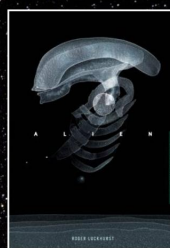
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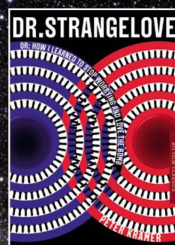
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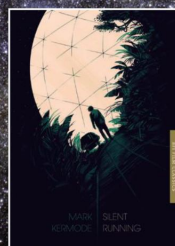
Peter Kramer
9781844577811



Andrew M. Butler
9781844578351



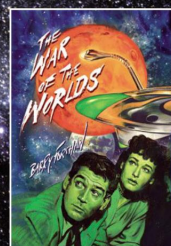
Kim Newman
9781844577910



Mark Kermode
9781844578320



Mark Boold
9781844578054



Barry Forshaw
9781844578115

★★★★★

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

★★★★★

THE GUARDIAN

★★★★★

TIME OUT

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Peter Bradshaw, THE GUARDIAN

*"There is an almost inexhaustible humanism at the
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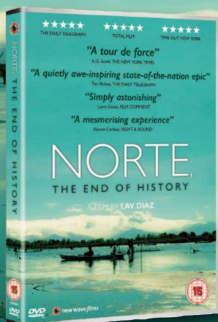
A.O. Scott, THE NEW YORK TIMES

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Tim Robey, THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

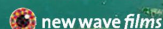
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Watercolour world: Paul Jesson, Timothy Spall

run the gamut from bulldog growls during courting to snorts of sardonic amusement at the young Ruskin's gaucheries. Like Seurat in Sondheim's *Sunday in the Park with George*, Turner channels his expressiveness through the extraordinary colour and light of his images. He is lavish with art and economical with words, though Dickensian dialogue runs around him playfully.

Turner, dogged observer and inveterate scribbler of storms and sunsets, proves a beautiful fit for Leigh's own watchful style, replete with long takes and unhurried exchanges. Leigh was once rebuked by David Thomson as "a rapt observer of the process of acting", but *Mr Turner* shows him achieving a thrilling integration of theme, visual style and bravura performance.

One gets the feeling that Leigh is deeply invested in this thoughtful meditation on the tenacity of the ageing artist, whose fierce will to make art has him pushing through his collapsing health to go beyond conventional tastes. Unbowed, Turner produced pictures like the exhilarating *Rain, Steam and Speed – The Great Western Railway*, of which biographer Anthony Bailey observed: "It was a masterpiece. Nobody bought it." Tracing the arc of Turner's popularity from society's darling to the butt of music-hall jokes and Queen Victoria's opprobrium ("a dirty, yellow mess"), the film is both a paean to stubbornly personal late works and a glorious example of one. Humane, deeply felt and gorgeously executed, this portrait of the artist as an old man is a masterwork. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by Georgina Lowe
Written by Mike Leigh
Cinematography Dick Pope
Film Editor Jon Gregory
Production Designer Suzie Davies
Music Composed by Gary Yershon
Sound Recordist Tim Fraser
Costume Designer Jacqueline Durran

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 Film Institute,
 Diaphana, France 3
 Cinéma, Untitled 13
 Commissioning Ltd

Production Companies Film4, Focus Features
 International and
 BFI present in
 co-production
 with Diaphana,
 France 3 Cinéma
 and Amusement
 Park Films
 In association with
 LipSync Productions
 A Thin Man film
 A film by Mike Leigh
 Developed with the
 support of the
 MEDIA Programme
 of the European
 Union, Film4

Developed and made
 with the support of
 the BFI's Film Fund
 Co-produced by
 Untitled 13 Limited,
 Untitled 13 Turner
 Produktion and
 Diaphana
Executive Producers
 Tessa Ross
 Norman Merry
 Gail Egan

Cast
Timothy Spall
 J.M.W. Turner
Dorothy Atkinson
 Hannah Danby
Marion Bailey
 Sophia Booth
Paul Jesson
 William Turner Sr
Lesley Manville

Mary Sommerville
Martin Savage
 Benjamin Robert
 Haydon
Ruth Sheen
 Sarah Danby
David Horovitch
 Dr Price
Karl Johnson
 Mr Booth
Peter Wight
 Joseph Gillott
Joshua McGuire
 John Ruskin
Stuart McQuarrie
 Ruskin's father
Sylvestra Le Touzel
 Ruskin's mother
Leo Bill
 J.E. Mayall
Kate O'Flynn
 prostitute
Sinead Matthews
 Queen Victoria

Karina Fernandez
 Miss Coggins
Richard Bremner
 George Jones
Mark Stanley
 Clarkson Stanfield
Jamie Thomas King
 David Roberts
Tom Wlaschiha
 Prince Albert
Patrick Godfrey
 Lord Egremont
Niall Buggy
 John Carew
Fred Pearson
 Sir William Beechey
Tom Edden
 C.R. Leslie
Clive Francis
 Sir Martin
 Archer Shee
Robert Portal
 Sir Charles Eastlake
James Fleet

John Constable
Nicholas Jones
 Sir John Soane
Roger Ashton-Griffiths
 Henry William
 Pickersgill
Simon Chandler
 Sir Augustus
 Wall Callcott
Edward de Souza
 Thomas Stothard
Oliver Maltman
 theatre actor
Sam Kelly
 theatre actor

Dolby Digital
In Colour
[2.35:1]
Distributor
 E1 Films

London, 1828. A middle-aged J.M.W. Turner, at the height of his artistic popularity, lives a bachelor life dedicated to his art, aided by his devoted father. He visits the Continent, and delights his patron's guests at Petworth House in Sussex with his coarse painting habits. He gives incomprehensible lectures at the Royal Academy in London, and dabbles in colour theory.

Mrs Danby, mother of his adult daughters, pesters him for money. His father's death rocks him. He teases John Constable, using a last-minute daub of red pigment on his own work to show up his rival's flord offering in an exhibition. Turner starts a secret affair in Margate with widow Mrs Booth, while also sleeping with his housekeeper Hannah. John Ruskin champions Turner's art but the critics (and Queen

Victoria) loathe its increasing abstraction. Lashed to a ship's mast to experience a storm, Turner develops bronchitis and a heart murmur. His fascination for a passing steam train results in a painting, as does his view of the final towing of the warship HMS Temeraire. Turner refuses a £100,000 offer for his entire personal collection, insisting that it will be left to the nation. His work is mocked on the music-hall stage.

Physically broken but unbowed, Turner moves to Chelsea secretly with Mrs Booth and paints on stubbornly. Hannah, herself ill, traces him to his new life but won't confront him. Staggering from his sickbed, Turner rouses himself to sketch a drowned female corpse on the riverside. He dies peacefully, muttering, "The sun is God."

My Name Is Hmmm...

France 2013
 Director: Agnès Troublé aka agnès b.
 Certificate m s

Reviewed by Sophie Mayer

See Industry,
 page 19

Agnès Troublé, better known as agnès b., has produced or executive produced 29 films, including Harmony Korine's *Mister Lonely*, *Trash Humpers* and *Spring Breakers*. *Je m'appelle Hmmm...* is her first feature as director, and it is as curious and uncertain as its title.

Troublé applies considerable care and ingenuity to a difficult project, creating the withdrawn and fractured subjectivity of a 12-year-old girl being sexually abused by her father. She blends a stark social-realist depiction of austerity northern France with surreal strategies for suggesting Céline's consciousness, including freeze frames, colour filters, dance sequences and prolonged handheld shots of various kinds of ground surface. An attention to abstract patterns and neon colours is suggestive of the filmmaker's other career as a fashion designer but also expresses the ways in which Céline is attempting to understand and survive her experience.

This attention to *mise en scène* clashes with the attempt at a believable human narrative, but could be read as Céline opting into a fantasy world as a flight from the bleak realism of her family home. Her choice of a school outing as a means of escape is reminiscent of Claude Miller's *Class Trip* (1998), in which a tween boy translates sexual abuse into hallucinations of terrorism. Céline's visions are more gentle and – especially given our lack of investment in seeing her returned to her parents, Estelle and Dany – lend themselves less to the tight plotting of Miller's thriller. Albeit more erratic, *My Name Is Hmmm...* plays out somewhere close to the allegorical realism of Jonathan Glazer's *Under the Skin* (2013), especially when Céline wanders away from the school group and secretly hitches a ride with Scottish trucker Pete.

This odd couple travel around northern France engaging in a series of performance-art-like moments. Pete is played by the artist Douglas Gordon, who's a placid if unpredictable presence here, in contrast to the ferocity of his own filmmaking. The scenes have



Beginner's truck: Lou-Lélia Demerliac

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➔ a Varda-like playfulness: Pete cuts down a windsock for Céline to play with as readily as he buys her a toothbrush; he picks up a teenage hitchhiker whom Céline idolises, from a town where the local mafia speak in rhyme and the barman transforms into a werewolf.

In these and other scenes, Troublé indulges a catholic passion for cinema, cutting in Super-8 and video footage, including a fireworks sequence shot by Jonas Mekas and a couple of dreams that mash up 70s experimental film and 80s video nasties. Structuralist devices such as the repeated pans overhead, ending in freeze frames, are not fully integrated into the film's language.

Lou-Lélia Demerliac manages both a mutinous ferocity and a haunted joyfulness as Céline, but both Pete and Dany are, differently, mystifying: physically similar but temperamentally at odds, these lost men are inexplicable in their motivations and claims on the viewer's sympathy. In profound ways, however, they – and the film's excesses – are incidental to Céline's fragile discovery of what Antonio Negri, wandering up to the travellers' campfire, calls a language of joy. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Producer

Christophe Audeguis

Written by

Agnès Troublé
In collaboration with
Jean-Pol Fargeau

Director of Photography

Jean-Philippe

Editor

Jeff Nicorosi

Art Directors

Thomas Kertudo
Clément Colin

Original Music

Jean-Benoît Dunckel
Julien Langendorff

Sound Recordist

Yves Osmu

Cast

©Love Streams
agnès b. Productions

Production Companies

A Love Streams
agnès b. Productions

Film Extracts

Tout va bien (1972)

Cast

Lou-Lélia Demerliac

Céline

Sylvie Testud

Estelle, mother

Jacques Bonnaffé

Dany, father

Douglas Gordon

Pete Ellis,

truck driver

Marie-Christine

Barraut

grandmother

Jean-Pierre Kalfon

café owner

Jean-François

Garreard

informant

Antonio 'Toni' Negri

vagabond

philosopher

Georges-Henri

Guedj

Grégoire Colin

young men in café

Jen-Cri

grinning boy

Noémie Ducourau

sister

Emile Gautier

brother

In Colour

[1.78:1]

Subtitles

Distributor

Soda Pictures

French theatrical title

Je m'appelle

Hmmn...

Orléans, France, the present. Twelve-year-old Céline prepares dinner for her younger siblings and her unemployed father Dany, while her mother Estelle works as a waitress. Sexually abused by Dany, Céline has become sad and withdrawn, but is unable to tell her mother or grandmother why, talking instead to her Barbie doll. A school trip to the seaside provides an opportunity for escape; she stows away in a lorry belonging to Pete Ellis, a Scottish trucker who has lost his own family in an unspecified manner. Pete is surprised to find Céline in his truck but tacitly agrees to take her on the road and look after her, especially when she tells him, indirectly, about her father. Meanwhile a nationwide search for Céline is under way and Dany is racked with guilt. After a picaresque journey, during which Céline and Pete come across butoh dancers, a wandering philosopher and several strange small towns, Céline is identified by a passer-by and Pete is taken into custody. He refuses to speak, even after he is arrested. Céline is released to her father, who promises to leave her alone.

A coda is delivered in voiceover by an adult Céline to her baby daughter.

The Overnights

USA 2014

Director: Jesse Moss



Desolation row: *The Overnights*

Reviewed by Jason Anderson

Spoiler alert: this review contains details not revealed until the end of the documentary.

Like many of the words spoken by Lutheran pastor Jay Reinke in *The Overnights* – Jesse Moss's engrossing and ultimately tragic documentary about hard times and the limits of Christian charity in recession-era America – the lines that are first heard by viewers inevitably take on a different cast in light of the film's final revelations. "It's easy to become a facade, maybe especially when you're a pastor," says Reinke. "The public persona – you can believe that. And the private person becomes something else. And the result is always pain."

The pain caused by the distance between Reinke's selves will be shared in large part by anyone who witnesses the shattering of his facade when he is forced to admit to his feelings

of same-sex attraction and the double life he has concealed. Having witnessed how much energy he has expended on the lonely work of fulfilling the core Christian tenet of loving and caring for one's neighbours (especially the least wanted among us), few will be unmoved by the failure of a man who has tried so hard to be good.

Yet Reinke's agony is just a fraction of the despair, anger and frustration contained in Moss's film, shot over the course of 18 months as the filmmaker lived in the community of overnights at the Concordia Lutheran Church in Williston, North Dakota. Each of the men Moss introduces has his own story of hardship, and many talk of their increasingly desperate efforts to provide for families back home in towns as desolate as the one abandoned by the Joads in the days of the Dust Bowl.

While some of the newcomers are capable of

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by

Jesse Moss
Amanda McBaine

Written by

Jesse Moss

Photographed by

Jesse Moss

Edited by

Jeff Gilbert

Original Music

T. Griffin

Supervising Sound Editor/

Re-recording Mixer

Zach Martin

©Mile End West Inc.

Production

Companies

Drafthouse Films

presents a Mile End

Films production

in association with

Al Di La Films and

Impact Partners

Supported by

grants from The

Sundance Institute

Documentary

Film Program, The

Catapult Film Fund

Made with the

generous support

of Impact Partners

Additional support

provided by The

MacDowell Colony,

The Independent

Filmmaker Project,

Department of

Cinema San Francisco

State University

Fiscal Sponsor

The San Francisco

Film Society

In Colour

[1.85:1]

Distributor

Dogwoof

This documentary follows the struggles of Williston, a town in North Dakota, to cope with the influx of thousands of men who come seeking work in the region's booming oil industry but are often unable to find adequate accommodation or assistance. The murder of a local schoolteacher by two such newcomers in 2012 has provoked a climate of fear and mistrust in the town. Jay Reinke, the pastor of the Concordia Lutheran Church, runs a programme to aid this new community of 'overnights' by providing beds for them inside the church and allowing others to sleep in trailers and cars in the parking lot. In so doing, he attracts the disapproval of municipal politicians, the ire of neighbours and criticism from his congregation. Many of the men who have been helped – including Alan Mezo, a recovering addict, and Keegan Edwards,

a young father who has come looking for work due to the dire economic conditions in his home state – speak of the positive impact of Reinke's programme, yet it remains difficult for all of them to maintain steady work or housing situations. Reinke also feels under pressure, especially when a local newspaper publishes information about a registered sex offender who has been staying in Reinke's family home alongside his wife and children. Matters take a downward turn for Edwards, Mezo and several of the other overnights. The town orders the end of the programme, and Reinke's personal crisis worsens when a blackmailing threat forces him to admit to having a same-sex affair. Despondent at having betrayed his family and his congregation, Reinke moves out of his home. A postscript reveals that he has been looking for work in the oilfields.

The Riot Club

United Kingdom 2014
Director: Lone Scherfig
Certificate 15 107m 5s

making the best of a bad situation – young father Keegan Edwards serves as the most optimistic figure, at least until he's overwhelmed by his share of woes – others are too mired in problems that predate their arrival in Williston. Several are recovering addicts who are unable to weather the hard knocks that become typical of their time in North Dakota – in one sequence, Reinke goes from bar to bar looking for a man who'd implored him for help in an earlier scene. As for ex-convicts such as Alan Mezo and Keith Graves – the soft-spoken sex offender whose presence precipitates the final crisis for Reinke's programme – their manner often betrays the weight of their regrets about the past and their stymied hopes for any kind of brighter future. Judging by what we see of these men's experience, Reinke is right when he laments: "This has broken them in ways they weren't broken before."

Moss has described Barbara Kopple's *Harlan County USA* (1976) as a touchstone for *The Overnighters* and it's easy to see its influence on his filmmaker's eagerness to situate his subjects' personal narratives within a wider (and similarly brutal) socioeconomic context. A savvy student of the lessons of *cinéma vérité*, Moss also greatly benefits from the intimacy he develops with the overnighters, such that his presence is rarely noted even in moments of considerable duress – for example when the pastor is essentially chased down the street by the reporter who's found out about Graves's sex-offender status.

Though it contains a host of vividly rendered subjects, Moss's film is most powerful as a portrait of Reinke. As admirable as he may be for his determination to follow his saviour's toughest lessons, he can also seem enamoured of the rightness of his mission, to the point that he appears wilfully blind to his programme's impact on his congregants and loved ones. As the situation worsens, his behaviour also becomes more erratic and alarming. "You think you're protected when you say less but it puts you more at risk, and it puts others at risk," Reinke tells Graves, in a charged confrontation. Having seemed defeated long before the events that fatally imperil the project, Graves is taken aback by Reinke's intensity, quietly telling him, "You don't have to become hostile." (As we later realise, Reinke's comments may be more a matter of self-excoriation.)

Even more unsettling is the sequence in which Reinke – attempting to retrieve an RV that has been abandoned by Mezo after he is expelled due to the discovery of a sex offence in his own past – is threatened by a rifle-toting woman who wants him and the vehicle off the property immediately. Luckily for Moss, she trades the gun in for a broom before she goes after the guy with the camera.

Indeed, Moss's ability to maintain a steady yet sympathetic gaze gives *The Overnighters* a dramatic urgency that's lacking in drier studies of the new realities of America's fast-eroding heartland. And while such final-act twists can often seem as contrived in non-fiction films as they do in their Hollywood counterparts, Reinke's own confession of deceit lands like a body blow. "I'm the one who is broken," laments the pastor, as he joins the gallery of shattered men he once sought to serve. 



Leaders of the pack: *The Riot Club*

Reviewed by Kate Stables

Laura Wade's stage play *Posh* received a rapturous reception in 2010 for its vivisection of the snobbery, terrifying behaviour and nepotism of an Oxford University all-male club dinner, apparently inspired by the real-life Bullingdon Club. Much media interest subsequently centred on the fact that the UK's current coalition prime minister, the chancellor of the exchequer and the mayor of London were all concurrent Bullingdon members in the late 1980s. Even Harvard's notorious Skull and Bones secret society has never pulled off a seats-of-power trifecta to match that.

Four years on and the sharply political tang and topicality of the original play have mutated into a more internationally accessible but less toothy film adaptation. Not that *The Riot Club's* energetic

class warfare has dimmed – the scions of wealth are still notably noxious. Yet in the attempt to open it up with a first-act competition for membership, the story's dramatic intensity gets lost. Director Lone Scherfig (now on her fourth British movie) has nimbly recreated the men-behaving-badly strand of the original play but the piece's punchy political outrage has evaporated.

What was once the raucous high-stakes unravelling of a tight-knit group becomes the more commonplace story of Max Irons's posh-but-pleasant Miles getting in with a bad lot, the headily reckless Riot Clubbers. Like Scherfig's *An Education* (2009), this is the story of a young person's ambivalent seduction but more crudely executed, somehow lacking the director's trademark ability to mesh comedy and tough themes. 

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Graham Broadbent
Pete Czernin
Written by
Laura Wade
Based on her stage play *Posh*
Director of Photography
Sebastian Blenkow
Editor
Jake Roberts
Production Designer
Alice Normington

Music
Kasper Winding
Production Sound Mixer
Ray Beckett
Costume Designer
Steven Noble

©Blueprint Pictures
(Posh) Ltd, Channel
Four Television
Corporation, British
Film Institute
Production

Companies
Film4, HanWay
and BFI present in
association with
Universal Pictures
International,
Pinewood Pictures
a Blueprint Pictures
production
A Lone Scherfig film
Made with the
support of BFI
Film Fund, Film4
Executive Producers

Lizzie Francke
Sam Lavender
Tessa Ross
Thorsten Schumacher
Peter Watson
Ivan Dunleavy
Steve Norris

Cast
Sam Claflin
Alistair
Max Irons
Miles

Douglas Booth
Harry
Jessica Brown Findlay
Rachel
Holliday Grainger
Lauren
Natalie Dormer
Charlie
Freddie Fox
James
Sam Reid
Hugo
Ben Schnetzer

Dimitri
Tom Hollander
Jeremy Ryle

Dolby Digital
In Colour
[2.35:1]

Distributor
Universal Pictures
International
UK & Ireland

Oxford University, present day. The Riot Club, a centuries-old debauched dining society, is short of two members. Freshmen and rivals Miles and Alistair are chosen as candidates and, after various initiation rites, become members. Miles is romancing working-class student Lauren. Ambitious right-winger Alistair meets fellow member Hugo's Uncle Jeremy, a onetime Riot Club member and key Conservative Party fixer.

The private club dinner is held in a country gastro-pub. Disgruntled by the failure of landlord Chris to provide the promised ten-bird roast, the drunken club members needle him. Miles wins a drinking game and is crowned Lord Riot. Angered, Alistair summons Lauren with a prank text from Miles's mobile phone.

Hugo is shamed when Charlie, the escort he has hired, refuses to service the entire club. Lauren arrives. The club members offer her £27,000 to fettle all of them. She is grabbed and groped before escaping. Alistair rants about his hatred of poor people, and the Riot Club (bar Miles) destroy the dining room. Alistair, aided by the others, beats Chris savagely when he confronts them. Miles tries to stop them.

The next day, Miles is told that, as the newest member, he will be offered up as the culprit to the police. Chris can't identify his assailant but the police arrest Alistair, whose DNA is found on Chris. Miles quits the Riot Club. Uncle Jeremy offers Alistair top legal help and an internship if he shields the club. Alistair gladly accepts.

➔ Tempting Miles with ridiculous tailcoats, shouty quiz-style initiations and “top bants” with tittering Etonians, the film fights an uphill battle to make Riot Clubbing look attractive. This isn’t the languidly desirable Oxford privilege that we’re familiar with from, say, *Brideshead Revisited*. Bar a few honeyed-stone vistas and venerable libraries (there’s a lovely boy-meets-girl exchange set on a college roof, literally among the dreaming spires), the production design is surprisingly unappealing too. Visually cramped, key scenes are crammed into pub and cloister corners with a distinct lack of glamour.

Compensating for the perversely low allure of the setting, however, is Wade’s scrapping script. Full of blackly comic bare-knuckle satire, it takes on the closed loop between top English public schools, Oxbridge and the Establishment with relish. Acute about the them-and-us exclusivity of the Riot Clubbers (“If you have to ask about membership, you’re not really the right sort of chap”), it’s spot-on about their kneejerk snobbery, dismissing other Oxford students as “bootstrappy regionals”. Alistair (Sam Claflin), a right-wing fresher, is the eloquent mouthpiece for the Rioters’ lack of social empathy, frothing with rage at hoi polloi. Wade is a gifted, and cruel, ventriloquist of public-school banter and humour (“How do you make an Eton mess?” “Tell him he’s got into Bristol!”). The club chat, throbbing with one-upmanship, is a convincing mixture of preening and puerility, one member chortling at ‘neologism’ because “he said ‘jism’”. Speaking of which, the film’s amused accounts of gross-out rituals (piss- and snot-spiked port, trashed rooms smeared with Riot sperm) have the whiff of transgressive authenticity.

But, irritatingly, this acuity doesn’t carry through to the characterisation of the club members, who are sketchy debauchers, power-plotters or silly asses to a man. With the exception of Claflin’s nuanced insecure newcomer, exploding destructively while drunk on vodka and his own rhetoric, the talented cast play mostly on one note. And although it’s a movie that excoriates inherited privilege, both Irons and Freddie Fox (sweatily watchable as arse-covering club president James) are, of course, the offspring of famous acting dynasties.

And then there’s the woman problem. The film is, literally, a boys’ club. Lauren, Miles’s working-class girlfriend, is a transparent audience proxy, alarmed by the careless cruelty of the club. Like businesslike escort Charlie, who rebuffs the club’s business, or the pub landlord’s feisty daughter (a wasted Jessica Brown Findlay), she’s a collection of story functions rather than a fully rounded character. As the women are sequentially humiliated and the plot rolls towards its not entirely plausible climax (how many would-be Tory politicians really think that a violent attack is a brush-it-under-the-carpet youthful error?), *The Riot Club*’s mix of glee, caricatured right-wing spleen and moral censure becomes increasingly unstable. I suspect that the property-trashing excess of the last act is meant to be a commentary on the smashing up of the welfare state. But distracted by the thrilling spectacle of breaking glass and hate-braying toffs (“I fucking hate the working classes!”), will anyone even notice? 📌

Sin City 2 A Dame to Kill For

Cyprus/USA/Russian Federation/France/United Kingdom 2014

Directors: Robert Rodriguez, Frank Miller

Certificate 18 102m 20s

Reviewed by Kim Newman

It’s been nearly 10 years since filmmaker Robert Rodriguez and graphic novelist Frank Miller teamed up to turn Miller’s stylised hardboiled graphic-novel series into a unique-looking movie. Closely matching the look of the comics, 2005’s *Sin City* and this long-delayed follow-up are in high-gloss black-and-white with colour highlights – red dresses, blue eyes – and present a starry cast of male character actors and model-beautiful starlets posing as if for comics panels or paperback covers against a digitally rendered film-noir shadow world. Since 2005, Miller has struck out on his own with *The Spirit* – drawn from comics by Will Eisner but looking like a *Sin City* spin-off – while Rodriguez has gone down the grindhouse route to diminish returns in the *Machete* movies. The only major format change in *Sin City: A Dame to Kill For* is that it’s inevitably in 3D, though it should be noted that Rodriguez was an early adopter of that particular wave with *Spy Kids 3-D* (2003) and *The Adventures of Sharkboy and Lavagirl* (2005).

Long in the making, *A Dame to Kill For* risks turning up after the party’s died. What was once a bold, innovative style has been imitated so often it seems mainstream; more troubling, what once seemed a critique of the misogyny of classic noir and bestselling pulp now feels uncomfortably like an endorsement. *Sin City* featured an array of glamorous, imperilled, duplicitous dames – Miller’s favourite female archetype is the homicidal sex worker – but refrained from tackling the femme fatale. Here, Eva Green – also a Miller-designed sex gorgon in 300: *Rise of an Empire* – plays a ludicrously objectified creature whose near-demonic wickedness is packaged in a form that enraptures and enslaves all men within range. Green is entertainingly verminous but she’s literally a cartoon figure – think Evil Jessica Rabbit – next to the James M. Cain, Dashiell Hammett or Raymond Chandler characters she’s composited from. Those elegant,



Sour town: Mickey Rourke

thoughtful writers liked complicated bad girls but Miller takes his cues from the disgust for women that throbs through Mickey Spillane’s cruder pulp novels. The fate of Green’s character, being gutshot during a smooch, is a lift from Spillane’s *I, the Jury* – which Ian Fleming referenced in *Casino Royale*, meaning this is the second time Green has endured the ‘bitch is dead’ business.

It may be a problem for those with only dim memories of *Sin City* that two stories here are a prequel (‘A Dame to Kill For’) and a sequel (‘Nancy’s Last Dance’) to the major episodes of the first film. There is some confusion in the braiding of stories taking place at different times and an opening hook – Mickey Rourke’s Marv struggling to recall where he got his distinctive, unexpectedly designer trenchcoat – is never returned to. Plastic surgery half-explains why Josh Brolin can step into the role Clive Owen played last time round, though Rourke, Jessica Alba, Rosario Dawson and others (including Bruce Willis, whose character died in *Sin City*) take up where they left off. Powers Boothe, who got little to do in the first movie, relishes the promotion to main villain of two whole episodes and – along with Green – seems able to enjoy himself within the straitjacket of this utterly artificial, mostly affectless world. 📌

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by

Robert Rodriguez
Aaron Kaufman
Stephen L’Heureux
Sergei Bespalov
Alexander
Rodnyansky
Mark C. Manuel

Written by

Frank Miller
Based on the graphic novels by Frank Miller

Shot by

Robert Rodriguez

Cut by

Robert Rodriguez

Production Design

Steve Joyner

Caylah Eddeblute

Music

Robert Rodriguez

Carl Thiel

Production

Sound Mixer

Ethan Andrus

Costumes

Nina Proctor

Visual Effects

Prime Focus

@Maddartico Limited

Production

Companies

Aldamisa

Entertainment

in association

with Dimension

Films present a

Troublemaker

Studios, AR Films,

Solipist Films

production

Co-produced by Davis

Films Productions

In association with

Prescience & Altus

Media and Prime

Time Productions

Executive Producers

Frank Miller

Bob Weinstein

Harvey Weinstein

Zanne Devine

Adam Fields

Elizabeth Avellan

Marci Madison

Tim Smith

Alastair Burlingham

Oleg Boyko

Kia Jam

Kipp Nelson

Theodore O’Neal

Allyn Stewart

Marina Bessalov

Boris Terev

John Paul Dejoria

Jere Hausfater

Namit Malhotra

Film Extracts

Sin City (2005)

Cast

Mickey Rourke

Marv

Jessica Alba

Nancy Callahan

Josh Brolin

Dwight McCarthy

Joseph

Gordon-Levitt

Johnny

Rosario Dawson

Gail

Bruce Willis

Hartigan

Eva Green

Ava Lord

Powers Boothe

Senator Roark

Dennis Haysbert

Manute

Ray Liotta

Joey

Jaime King

Goldie/Wendy

Christopher Lloyd

Kroenig

Jamie Chung

Miho

Jeremy Piven

Bob

Christopher Meloni

Mort

Juno Temple

Sally

Marton Csokas

Damien Lord

Dolby Digital

In Colour and

Black and White

[1.85:1]

Some screenings

presented in 3D

Distributor

Lionsgate UK

but he resists, shooting her mid-kiss. When Johnny recovers and beats Roark at cards again, the senator murders him. Hulking, hard-to-kill Marv is inclined to protect Nancy Callahan, a stripper who was once saved from Roark’s serial-killer son Junior by policeman Hartigan. With Hartigan and Junior dead, Roark is out for revenge on Nancy. She scars herself and joins Marv in mounting an assault on Roark’s home. Roark is about to kill Nancy when he see Hartigan’s ghost, which distracts him long enough for Nancy to shoot him dead.

Soul Boys of the Western World

United Kingdom 2014
Director: George Hencken
Certificate 12A 110m 16s



They're indestructible: Spandau Ballet

Reviewed by Geoffrey Macnab

There is a touching and funny moment midway through George Hencken's documentary about the New Romantic pop band Spandau Ballet. One of the band members is reminiscing (seemingly without irony) about when it all went sour. It's a familiar story told in countless other films about bands – the pressures of recording and touring take their toll, especially when the musicians grow older and have families. At a recording session, we are told, morale was very low and people were leaving the studio early because... they were having a sofa delivered. It's an endearing reason for a band to split up. The drugs, the groupies and the life of excess were all by the by. What really did for Spandau Ballet was the furniture.

In *Soul Boys of the Western World*, long-time Julien Temple collaborator Hencken is following the example of Temple's various films about Dr Feelgood, the Sex Pistols et al – she is telling a part of Britain's social history through its rock music.

You don't need to be a Spandau Ballet fan to warm to the band. They were working-class grammar-school kids from North London whose

mums and dads listened to Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett. They were growing up in the punk era and their music reflected both Sinatra and a bit of Johnny Rotten. Style journalist Robert Elms came up with the name Spandau Ballet after seeing it written on a toilet wall in Berlin. The name may suggest Germanic angst but the music was brassy and accessible. Lead singer Tony Hadley had a booming and very recognisable voice. And the band benefited from being in at the beginning of the MTV era, their songs and colourful image perfect for this new television 'pop pipeline'.

Even in the early days, when the band members dressed like corsairs, they seemed grounded and had common sense and an ironic, very British sense of humour. That's why their acrimonious split in 1990 seemed so surprising. Gary Kemp may have been the driving force of the band as songwriter, but Hadley was also a key part of their success. The footage of three of the band shuffling uncomfortably in front of the media after the court case in which they tried and failed to sue Gary for a bigger share of the royalties is poignant. It's as if they seem a little embarrassed at living up to the cliché of the ego-driven rock band that falls apart amid much rancour.

Thankfully, the film has a happy ending of sorts. It's hardly a spoiler to reveal that the band did eventually reunite. In this case, the reasons for doing so weren't simply financial. Their solo ventures may have foundered to a greater or lesser degree but what Hencken reveals is that it was also their friendship that pulled them back together. They yearned to recapture the camaraderie they had enjoyed so much when they were still Islington kids dreaming of the big time. As they put it, they didn't want to "lose each other".

Hencken does a very good job of telling the story of a band that wasn't as confrontational as the Sex Pistols or as dysfunctional as The Kinks. They emerged in the Thatcher era but their music wasn't oppositional. One of the paradoxes about Spandau Ballet is that for all the exoticism of their outfits and personas, the band members were resolutely down to earth. Even in their pomp, they didn't really misbehave that badly. Nevertheless, their music helped define the era. Whenever anybody today wants to invoke pop culture in early- or mid-80s Britain, it's a fair bet they'll use songs such as "True" or "To Cut a Long Story Short".

Still the Enemy Within

United Kingdom 2014
Director: Owen Gower
Certificate 15 112m 56s

Reviewed by Sophie Mayer

Grass growing over former pit collieries across the northeast of England is a mordant opening metaphor for the attempted erasure of mining, mining unions and the miners' strike from a people's history of Britain. It's one also used by Bill Morrison in his haunting BFI archival documentary *The Miner's Hymns* (2010). *Still the Enemy Within* is thus not the first film to put the mining community on record, but in Joe Henry, Norman Strike, Howard Wilson, Jim Tierney, Steve Hammill, Paul Symonds, Ron Stoa, Betty Cook, Anne Scargill, Gary McFarlane, Joyce Sheppard, Christine Wall, Paula Kirby, Brenda Picking and Mike Jackson, whose story is also the basis of Matthew Warchus's *Pride*, it has found a unique attraction. These utterly compelling storytellers are at once historians, jokers, philosophers, eulogisers and political analysts. On the cruel policy of being ordered to create a coal surplus prior to the strike, for example: "The saying 'digging our own graves' were never so apt." While formally the film could be categorised as a talking-heads documentary, the talk is of such characterful verve that it feels closer to Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger's radio ballads.

The use of music and dramatisations, however, comes nowhere close to the integrative power of MacColl and Seeger's project. Awkwardly shot on digital, the dramatisations are re-enactments whose literalism implies a lack of trust in the power of the narration to hold our attention, maligning both speakers and viewers. And though the choice of music is initially evocative – and finally powerful, in the end-credit use of The Men They Couldn't Hang's 'Shirt of Blue', which was written to mark the miners' strike – the technique of cutting news-footage montages to post-punk and pop songs numbs and blurs through regular repetition, undermining any potential Eisensteinian shock. Given that the film



Fight the power: *Still the Enemy Within*

Credits and Synopsis

Producers

Scott Millaney
Steve Dagger

Editor

Chris Duveen

Sound Re-
recording Mixer
Dan Johnson

©Wellingmax Ltd

Production
Company

A Wellingmax
production
A film by George
Hencken

In Colour

[1.85:1]

Distributor

Metrodome
Distribution Ltd

A documentary telling the story of British pop band Spandau Ballet through interviews and archive footage. We learn how the band members met at Dame Alice Owen's school in Islington, north London; how they were influenced by soul music and punk; and how they emerged as one of the key New Romantic groups of the early 1980s, going on to perform at Live Aid in 1985. The film also chronicles the reasons behind the band's break-up. Gary Kemp (who was the main writer of the band's songs) and his brother Martin went on to act in a film about the Kray twins. This and the pressures of touring and recording took their toll and, in 1990, Spandau Ballet was dissolved. A few years later, the other band members sued Gary Kemp for a share of songwriting royalties but lost the case and were faced with huge costs. At that point, it seemed unlikely the band would ever play again. However, in 2009 there was a reunion and the band members continue to play together today.

was funded independently through union sponsorship, it's questionable whether either the music clearances or the dramatisations represent the best use of money.

A more pointed use of news footage is needed to support the speakers' incisive analysis of the mainstream media's role in the strike, particularly the portrayal of the strikers and union leader Arthur Scargill: "We were demonised. We were from Mars. We were from hell." Thus, as well as re-presenting the strike and mining communities from their participants' point of view, the film uses their political analysis to shape the narrative, starting with the significance of the National Union of Mineworkers in making and breaking national politics in the 1970s. "The thing that was stood in the way were us."

The effects of the transformation of union power via demonisation are most palpable in the death of David Jones on the picket line, and the violent policing of the Battle of Orgreave, which is framed by the observation that the police didn't stop demonstrators who arrived at the site but rather arranged them, creating an ambush. The notion of police given licence to act as a paramilitary force resonates for contemporary viewers with images from Ferguson in Missouri and Marikana in South Africa, as well as experiences of kettling and other tactics in the UK. The film ends by drawing a strong connection, verging on direct causation, between the miners' strike and current British politics, including the wave of workers' and students' demonstrations.

"I got to have a lovely, lovely time having a bash at the state," says Howard Wilson, summing up his experience. He could also be summing up the film. In its documentation of heartfelt companionship, eloquent leadership, determination and the strategic thinking of a working-class community shaping national politics, *Still the Enemy Within* bears out Joe Henry's early claim that "solidarity weren't just a slogan". Here, in a way rarely seen in contemporary cinema, it is a potent way of life. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by Sinead Kirwan Mark Lacey Owen Gower	Sound Recordist Geoff Wong	Christopher Hird Mike Simons
Director of Photography Malcolm Hadley	@Bad Bonobo Ltd Production Companies Dartmouth Films presents a Bad Bonobo film	Dolby Digital In Colour [1.85:1]
Editor Paul Edmunds	Executive Producers	Distributor Bad Bonobo
Composer Rael Jones		

A documentary that uses new testimony from participants in the 1984-85 miners' strike – including members of solidarity groups such as Women Against Pit Closures and Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners – to document the contexts and consequences of the strike, with a focus on the northeast of England. Archive footage of community kitchens, early picket lines and the confrontation with police at the Battle of Orgreave in South Yorkshire draws a connection between prime minister Margaret Thatcher's determination to break the unions and the current austerity politics, as well as resistance to both.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

USA 2014, Director: Jonathan Liebesman
Certificate 12A 101m 9s

Reviewed by Ashley Clark

This Michael Bay-produced live-action update of the long-running comic book is a poor relation to Steve Barron's gritty, charming 1990 film of the same name. Here, a wafer-thin plot and Christopher Nolan-esque lugubriousness – both visual and tonal – are only intermittently interrupted by deafening blasts of haphazardly choreographed action and a smattering of tame pop-cultural quips. As intrepid reporter April O'Neil, the miscast Megan Fox interacts extremely awkwardly with the hulking, creepily roided-out CGI Turtles (who are barely characterised at all), while talented actors like Whoopi Goldberg and Will Arnett are given little to do. There are some striking flourishes in Neil Spisak's production design, notably a wall in rat-sensei Splinter's lair decked out with gleaming vintage boomboxes. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by Michael Bay Andrew Form Brad Fuller Galen Walker Scott Mednick Ian Bryce	Industrial Light & Magic Stunt Co-ordinator David Leitch	Cast Megan Fox April O'Neil Will Arnett Vern Fenwick William Fichtner Eric Sacks Danny Woodburn Splinter Abby Elliott Taylor Noel Fisher Michelangelo Jeremy Howard Donatello Pete Ploszek Leonardo Alan Ritchson Raphael Whoopi Goldberg Bernadette Thompson Tohoru Masamune Shredder
Written by Josh Appelbaum André Nemec Evan Daugherty Based on the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles characters created by Peter Laird, Kevin Eastman	@Paramount Pictures Corporation Production Companies Paramount Pictures and Nickelodeon Movies A Platinum Dunes production A Gama Entertainment, Mednick Productions, Heavy Metal production A Jonathan Liebesman film Filmed with the Support of The New York State Governor's Office for Motion Picture & Television Development Québec Production Services Tax Credit	Dolby Atmos / Datasat In Colour [2.35:1]
Director of Photography Lula Carvalho	Music Brian Tyler	Some screenings presented in 3D
Edited by Joel Negron Glen Scantlebury	Supervising Sound Editors Ethan Van Der Ryn Erik Aadahl Laurent Kossayan	Distributor Paramount Pictures UK
Production Designer Neil Spisak	Costume Designer Sarah Edwards	
Visual Effects and Animation	Executive Producers Denis L. Stewart Eric Crown Napoleon Smith III Jason T. Reed	

New York City, present day. At the docks, reporter April O'Neil tries to record footage of criminal gang the Foot Clan but a shadowy figure overcomes them. The Clan next attack a subway station and are again vanquished, this time by a number of speedy assailants. O'Neil follows the assailants to a rooftop: they identify themselves as the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (Donatello, Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael) but swear O'Neil to secrecy. O'Neil realises that they are the grown-up versions of the baby turtles her late father experimented on 15 years earlier. She confides in her father's lab partner, businessman Eric Sacks, who is later revealed to be the adoptive son of Foot Clan boss Shredder. Sacks relays the information to Shredder; they plan to spread a deadly virus and seize control by offering the mutagen – only found in the Turtles – as a cure. The Turtles' master Splinter (a human-like rat) sends them to find April, who is in danger. The Clan storm the Turtles' lair and capture Donatello, Leonardo and Michelangelo. Splinter instructs Raphael and April to save the Turtles before Shredder can extract the mutagen from them. Raphael saves them but Shredder escapes. April and the Turtles catch up with Shredder on the rooftop of Sacks's building and defeat him before he can release the toxin.

Time Is Illmatic

USA 2014
Director: One9

Reviewed by Ashley Clark

Released in 1994 at the tail end of hip-hop's golden age (agreed on by fans and scholars alike to span a rough period from the mid-80s to the mid-90s), *Illmatic* – the debut album by NYC native Nasir Jones, aka Nas – is widely regarded as one of the genre's towering peaks. Establishing a reflective tone immediately, the album opens with a sampled blast of the theme music from Charlie Ahearn's 1983 graffiti-bildungsroman *Wild Style*, before flowing into a fat-free, hard-edged, lyrically poetic 10-track account of life in the hardscrabble Queensbridge Projects. It arguably remains the apotheosis of rap-as-docudrama, and has been compared by critics variously to Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* and David Simon's HBO series *The Wire* on account of its sociopolitical scope and gritty observation.

Directed by 'One9' (who presumably hails from the McG school of obfuscatory monikers), *Time Is Illmatic* is a low-key, intermittently illuminating documentary that falls somewhere between a potted bio of Nas and a straightforward tribute to the LP 20 years down the line. (Nas has recently joined the nostalgia circuit – once reserved for rock acts – to perform the album in its entirety.) Via a fairly standard combination of talking-head interviews and well-researched archive material, the film covers Nas's early life, including his complex relationship with his father, jazz musician Olu Dara, and his first forays into music. Nas – a seemingly reluctant contributor here, despite effectively being handed the reins to tell his own story – comes to life briefly when discussing the early rap beefs between his Queens crew and the Boogie Down Productions team from the South Bronx; in these passages we get a clear sense of the import of local representation. The turning point for Nas arrives with the movingly recounted tale of the 1992 murder of his friend and collaborator 'Ill Will' Graham, whose name is integrated into the title of the eponymous LP.

It's unarguable that *Time Is Illmatic* will be catnip for Nas fans, but One9's decision to focus on this single work leaves the film sorely lacking in wider context. There is, for example, nothing on Nas's fascinating post-*Illmatic* career (which includes label-orchestrated competition with NYC contemporary Notorious B.I.G., a high profile run-in with Jay-Z and a string of challenging, complex albums), or any wider appraisal of the development of hip-hop from a musical, cultural or sociopolitical point of view. Nas's recent appearance at Harvard to launch a hip-hop scholarship is included, hinting at how much has changed in institutional perception of hip-hop in the interim years, but there is little to fill in the gaps.

For all its flaws and curious omissions, *Time Is Illmatic* quietly pulsates with a sadness for the plight of the community Nas left behind on his way to success. Influential African-American scholar Cornel West appears briefly as a talking head to impart some crucial context about the initial creation of the Projects, and how the G.I. Bill, signed into law by President Eisenhower, simultaneously helped to create a middle class for whites and entirely exclude blacks from it. The influx of crack into black



Tony Benn Will and Testament

United Kingdom 2014
Director: Skip Kite
Certificate 12A 95m 4s

Reviewed by Robert Hanks

When Tony Benn died earlier this year, there was an outpouring of sentiment from all sides of politics. The near-unanimous praise was incongruous to anyone old enough to remember when Benn was the most divisive figure in British politics, loathed by the mainstream left almost as much as by the right. What all those posthumous tributes called 'principle' was in the 1980s dismissed by many of his supposed comrades as recklessness, ego, even treachery.

The transformation from pariah to national treasure, widely regarded as the conscience of the British left, could be the basis of a fascinating documentary that would say something not just about Benn's career but about how politics and society changed around him in an age of transnational corporate power and free-market consensus. Instead, Skip Kite has made an insipid hagiography, short of context and critical thought.

The bulk of the film, apparently shot a year or so before he died, consists of Benn's narration of his life in rough chronological order, with digressions, illustrated by family photograph albums and archive news footage. The early years – his upbringing in an upper-class Liberal family between the wars, his wartime training as an RAF pilot and his early ventures in Labour politics – are the most interesting part. In particular, Benn speaks movingly of what seem to have been the two most important relationships in his life: with his older brother Michael, a pilot who was killed in a flying accident in 1944, and with his wife Caroline, to whom he was married for more than 50 years. She died in 2000, and speaking more than a dozen years later the pain of her absence is still visible.

Benn's version of his mature political career is less compelling, though. Partly, that's because it is more familiar (it really is time that his gag about leaving parliament to concentrate on politics was retired), though his fight to renounce his hereditary title in order to stay in the House of Commons bears retelling – you couldn't wish for a neater example of the anachronistic significance of class in late-20th-century British politics. But the deeper problem is the uncritical attitude – summed up by the ludicrous claim, on the film's website and accompanying press release, that Benn is "arguably [...]" the

Credits and Synopsis

Producer Skip Kite	Sound Mervyn Gerrard	Distributor Praslin Pictures Limited
Director of Photography Michael Miles	Production Company Praslin Pictures	Onscreen title Will and Testament
Editor Liza Ryan-Carter	Executive Producer Jacqueline Jean-Louis	
Production Design Kay Brown	In Colour [L.85:1]	
Original Score Composed and Performed by Michel Duvoisin		

At home and in a studio mock-up of a living room, former Labour minister Tony Benn reminisces about his political career and his personal life. Archive news film supplies historical context. The film ends with footage of the mourning that followed Benn's death in March this year.



Neighbourhood watch: Nas

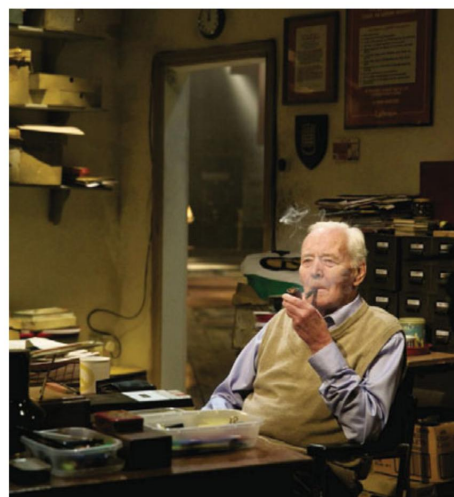
neighbourhoods is also briefly broached, while a sense of melancholy is most palpable in the haunted eyes and fragile tones of Nas's apparently hard-drinking brother Jabari, aka Jungle – easily the most compelling interviewee here.

In an intriguing directorial choice, One9 opts to shoot the present-day Projects-set scenes from a low angle, as if mimicking the viewpoint of a child. It's an approach that alludes to the iconic LP sleeve art – in which the face of a seven-year-old Nas, a preternaturally adult glare on his face, is transposed over the Queensbridge Projects – and accentuates the looming, oppressive nature of the concrete structures that informed Nas's enduring masterpiece. ☹

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by Erik Parker One9	@Illa Films LLC	Black and White [L.78:1]
Written by Erik Parker	Production Companies An Illa Films production in association with Balance of Extremes and Wisdombody, Inc.	Distributor Dogwoof
Director of Photography Frank Larson	A film by Erik Parker & One9	Alternative onscreen title Time Is Illmatic Nas
Edited by David Zieff One9	Supported by The Ford Foundation - JustFilms, Tribeca Film Institute, Tribeca All Access, Candescent Films	
Original Music B. Satz		
Supervising Sound Editor Steve Borne		
	In Colour and	

A documentary about New York rapper Nasir Jones, aka Nas, and specifically the creation of his 1994 debut album 'Illmatic'. Combining archive material with present-day interviews with Nas, his family and his colleagues, the film creates a biographical portrait of the rapper's early years, then focuses on his big musical break: signing with Columbia Records in 1992. The film analyses some of 'Illmatic's' key tracks, and concludes in 2013, with Nas attending a press conference at Harvard University to announce the launch of the Nasir Jones Hip-Hop Fellowship.



Pipe dreams: Tony Benn

most popular UK politician of all time".

The presentation of the Benn version without qualification or critique means that it is often uninformative, at times downright misleading. He gets away with tendentious political judgements (the Labour party should have attacked Margaret Thatcher's electoral dominance from the left?), self-contradiction (in the context of Iraq, he says that governments go to war when they are weak at home; in the context of the Cold War, the USSR was never going to start a war in Europe, given its domestic weakness) and denigration of other Labour politicians, notably Neil Kinnock. Most wince-makingly, we are shown footage of Benn asking Saddam Hussein if he has weapons of mass destruction: the man who authorised the massacre at Halabja assures him that he does not. This has the perverse effect of making Benn's stand against the Iraq War, a rare political decision that has been unequivocally vindicated by events, look like a consequence of gullibility or contrariness.

But that sort of thing is not surprising when the reality of politics – the hard graft of debate and compromise, internecine rivalry and limited financial resources – is reduced to anecdote and soundbite. The problem is augmented by some bizarrely kitsch presentation: Benn is filmed partly at home, partly in a studio mock-up of a living room, stuffed with period bric-a-brac – anglepoise lamp, Roberts radio – and political memorabilia, including what look like Jim Callaghan and Harold Wilson Toby jugs. (By the way, why did Benn, over decades, persistently mispronounce Callaghan – "Cal-uh-gun": was it purely passive-aggressive?) The space around the 'room' is hung with trade-union banners and blown-up newspaper front pages proclaiming Benn a devil or a messiah. Early gestures towards dramatic reconstruction – shuffling, slippered feet turn into a schoolboy's legs, in short trousers and long socks – thankfully fizzle out; elegiac mood music drags on.

At one point, Benn says that he is popular in old age because he is seen as harmless, something he dislikes: "I got a death threat the other day. I haven't had one for ages, and I was so chuffed." This cooing, wheedling love letter diminishes him. ☹

United We Fall

United Kingdom 2014
Director: Gary Sinyor
Certificate 15 89m 20s

Reviewed by Sam Davies

Screaming crowds, huge stadiums, even bigger egos, spectacular hairdos, dodgy agents, groupies. On paper an overlap between 1970s rock excess and all too much of modern-day football is clear. Or at least clear enough that you can see why director Gary Sinyor might have seen the potential in trying to put together a football version of *Spinal Tap*. However, as Brian Clough (probably) once put it, films aren't made on paper.

In practice, the biggest problem for *United We Fall* is its players. Given the ball by Sinyor and asked to run with it, in comedy terms Jack Donnelly, Jonathan Broke, Ryan Pope et al play it into touch and hit hospital pass after hospital pass. This is a film so unfunny you can feel your cheek muscles atrophying from underuse over the course of its 90 minutes.

But then there's little sense that Sinyor provided his actors with any kind of thought-through guidance. *United We Fall* is premised entirely on a checklist of popular footballer stereotypes – above all that they are exquisitely thick. In development the film was titled *IQ of 92*, riffing on *The Class of '92*, a recent documentary about the group of Manchester United players who really did win the treble in 1999. As those players proved, elite athletes tend to be, if not Fellows of All Souls, extremely shrewd, and often capable of running commercial empires (David Beckham) or media careers (Gary Neville). Sadly this makes for quite a dim film, one that 'raises issues' such as homophobia and Islamophobia but then forgets to make any point about them, while also sketching in a corrupt Fifa official, Farhad 'Frank' Farhoughi, who verges on xenophobic caricature. ☹

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Gary Sinyor
Conceived by
Gary Sinyor
Director of Photography
Luke Palmer
Editor
Emma Collins
Composer
David Kester
Sound Operator
Adam Toy
Costume Designer
Kashca Garwood
Walker

©Magnet Films
3 Limited
Production Company
Magnet Films
presents
Executive Producers
David Emanuel
Marc Gordon
Andreas Pours
Marc Rubinstein
Jonathan Seidler

Richard B. Utter
Miles Webber

Cast

Matthew Avery
Kwasi Abdullah
Amoako
Jonathan Broke
Kurt Kurtz
Jack Donnelly
Olly Hunter
Ryan Pope
Danny Keegan
James Rastall
Stevio Fallis
Dana Haqjoo
Farha 'Frank' Faroughi
Robert Portal
Prime Minister
Anouska Mond
Bella Davis
Sushil Chudasama
Niki Chouhan
Freya Parker
Shiv Fallis
Arina II
Arina Hunter
Grace Bishop

Gertie Kurtz

In Colour
[1.85:1]

Distributor
Magnet Films

A mockumentary in which five footballers reunite to reminisce about their time at Manchester United and the disastrous end to the 2010 season. They recount how they threw away the chance of a League, FA Cup and Champions League treble through a combination of stupidity and incompetence. Confessions and long-held grudges spark arguments but ultimately bring about reconciliation.

Violette

France/Belgium 2013
Director: Martin Provost
Certificate 15 138m 32s



To boldly go: Emmanuelle Devos

Reviewed by Sophie Mayer

"Spit out on paper everything that makes you so unbearable." Few writers, especially female writers, have taken up this challenge with as clear-sighted and impassioned an honesty as Violette Leduc. Born in 1907 to an unmarried servant who'd had a relationship with the son of her employers, Violette adopted her biological father's name and became a black marketeer under Vichy. In love with Maurice Sachs, persona non grata both as a resistance member and a homosexual, Leduc agreed to pass herself off as his wife in 1942. Sachs responded with that backhanded encouragement to write about what makes her "so unbearable" – and one of the most striking literary careers in post-war France was under way.

The pattern of erotic rejection and literary encouragement is repeated, in a major key, across Martin Provost's *Violette*, as five of its seven

chapters are concerned with Leduc's obsessive relationship with literary grandee Simone de Beauvoir. Sandrine Kiberlain's upright, closed-off grace as de Beauvoir provides a dynamic contrast to Emmanuelle Devos's pugnacious, unbounded energy as Leduc. Rather than sexual love, this great romance centres on writing and, particularly, writing fearlessly about women's bodies, lives and desires. It's a nuanced relationship, in which the few cutaways from Leduc's narrative are often used to convey de Beauvoir's loneliness and inability to access Leduc's immediacy of feeling. In one such scene, which may take place in Leduc's imagination – there are several dream sequences that are not initially indicated as such – Kiberlain sits or paces, prim and poised, in her vast empty apartment, closed off from Leduc's embodied life.

In one scene, de Beauvoir coolly describes

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Miléna Poylo
Gilles Sacuto
Screenplay
Martin Provost
Marc Abdelnour
René de Ceccatty
Director of Photography
Yves Cape
Editor
Ludo Troch
Art Director
Thierry François
Sound
Pascal Jasmes
Ingrid Ralet

Emmanuel Crosset
Costume Designer
Madeline Fontaine

©TS Productions,
France 3 Cinéma,
Climax Films
Production Companies
TS Productions
presents a France
3 Cinéma, Climax
Films co-production
With the participation
of Centre National
du Cinéma et de
l'Image Animée

With the support of
Région Île-de-France
and Région Limousin
In partnership with
Centre National
du Cinéma et de
l'Image Animée
With the participation
of Canal+, France
Télévisions, Ciné+,
TV5Monde, Belgacom
In association
with Palatine
Etoile 10, Banque
Postale Image 6
With the support
of Procirep, Angoa-

Agicoa and MEDIA
Programme of the
European Union
In co-production
with Belgacom
With the support
of Tax Shelter du
Gouvernement
Fédéral Belge

Cast

Emmanuelle Devos
Violette Leduc
Sandrine Kiberlain
Simone de Beauvoir
Olivier Gourmet

Jacques Guérin
Catherine Hiegel
Berthe
Jacques Bonnaffé
Jean Genet
Olivier Py
Maurice Sachs
Nathalie Richard
Hermine
Stanley Weber
René
Jean Toscan
Monsieur Motté

Dolby Digital
In Colour
[1.85:1]

Subtitles

Distributor
Soda Pictures

Vichy France, 1942. Violette Leduc runs across fields with dogs in pursuit, smuggling food to pay for accommodation for herself and writer Maurice Sachs. Violette is in love with Sachs and is passing herself off as his wife. He supports her first attempts at writing but her unrequited passion for him makes their sham marriage unbearable.

After he leaves, Violette returns to Paris and finds a new obsession: Simone de Beauvoir. Violette persuades de Beauvoir to read her first manuscript. Struck by Violette's honesty about class, gender and desire, de Beauvoir declares it powerful and intrepid, and arranges publication by Albert Camus at Gallimard. Violette, seeking the unconditional love that she never

received from her mother, struggles with de Beauvoir's arm's-length friendship. She is by turns grateful for and resentful of the patronage of de Beauvoir and perfume baron Jacques Guérin, though she finds it difficult to accept de Beauvoir's greater success. Violette undergoes ECG treatment after a collapse. She partially reconciles with her mother and completes the 1,000-page manuscript of her masterpiece 'La Bâtarde', which de Beauvoir agrees to preface.

Published in 1964, as France begins to change its laws on women's rights, the book finds a large and attentive audience. Violette leaves Paris for Faucon, a village in Provence, where she takes over an abandoned house and continues to write.

The Way He Looks

Brazil 2014
Director: Daniel Ribeiro

Reviewed by Alex Davidson

At this year's Berlin Film Festival, *The Way He Looks* won the Teddy Award, celebrating the best LGBT cinema. Based on his 2010 short *I Don't Want to Go Back Alone* and starring the same actors, Daniel Ribeiro's film follows Leonardo (Ghilherme Lobo), a blind teenager who yearns to escape from his overprotective parents and his unkind classmates and go on an American exchange programme. The only real positive in his social life is his close friendship with fellow student Giovana (Tess Amorim), who doesn't want him to leave. Then a handsome kid called Gabriel (Fabio Audi) joins the school and encourages Leonardo to try new experiences, unintentionally threatening the duo's tight bond. Though neither boy identifies as gay, Leonardo and Gabriel's friendship gradually develops into a potential romance.

Ribeiro has stated that he wanted to explore how sexuality develops when the visual aspect is taken away. It's an interesting premise. With sight out of the equation, the senses of touch (when Leonardo holds Gabriel as they ride a bike together), smell (Leonardo snuggles up to the hoodie that Gabriel leaves in his bedroom) and sound (the boys' conversation and love of music) come to the fore. Despite Leonardo's blindness, almost all the experiences he and Gabriel share – a visit to the cinema, an illicit trip to see a lunar eclipse – are primarily visual. Through whispering a description of the movie's plot and using rocks to explain how eclipses work, Gabriel helps Leonardo to become more involved in the visual world. Surprisingly, it is Leonardo's blindness rather than his suspected sexuality that riles the school bullies, whose ableist cruelty, including tripping him up and humiliating him at a party, is far nastier than the homophobic catcalls.

While it's easy to understand why Leonardo falls for Gabriel, who encourages his wish for



Fabio Audi, Ghilherme Lobo, Tess Amorim

independence, it's trickier to explain why the feelings are reciprocated. Despite the running theme of his yearning to escape his restrictive home life via the exchange programme (a plot thread left open), Lobo's portrayal of Leonardo seldom shows much fire, and his few moments of defiance don't really convince. Leonardo's innocence and gentle nature may make him an attractive proposition for Gabriel, but for the viewer he's rather bland. His one moment of spite – lashing out at Giovana when he believes she's dragged him away from a party out of jealousy – is a misunderstanding. Characterisation generally is weak. Gabriel is pretty but bland. Giovana is sulky, a victim of the gay-movie curse of being the jilted female friend.

Its simple symbolism, attractive leads and adolescent setting could make *The Way He Looks* an appealing 'first gay film' for young audiences. But despite Leonardo's burning desire to break free of his suburban life and experience the wonders of the world, Ribeiro's film ultimately plays it too safe, sacrificing interesting characterisation for cute, positive affirmation. **S**

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Daniel Ribeiro
Diana Almeida

Written by
Daniel Ribeiro

Director of Photography
Pierre de Kerchoue

Editor
Cristian Chinen

Art Director
Olivia Helena Sanches

Sound Recordist
Gabriela Cunha

Costume Designers
Carla Boregas
Flavia Lhacer

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Ltda/Polana
Filmes Ltda

Production Companies
Lacuna Filmes

presents
Sponsors: Sabesp,

Electrobras
Co-sponsors:

Prefeitura de São
Paulo Cultura,

Fomento Cinema
ao Prefeitura de

São Paulo
With the support

of Electrica,
Cinecolor Digital

Investment
from BNDES
Executive Producer
Diana Almeida

Cast

Ghilherme Lobo
Leonardo

Fabio Audi
Gabriel

Tess Amorim
Giovana

Lucia Romano
Laura

Eucir de Souza
Carlos

Selma Egrei
Avó Maria

Isabela Guasco
Karina

Victor Filgueiras
Guilherme

Pedro Carvalho
Fabio

Guga Auricchio
Carlinhos

In Colour
[2.35:1]

Subtitles

Distributor
Peccadillo

Pictures Ltd

Brazilian
theatrical title
Hoje Eu Quero
Volter Sozinho

São Paulo, the present. Leonardo, a blind teenager, and his friend Giovana return to school after the summer holidays. Leonardo yearns for his first kiss. A new boy, Gabriel, joins their class. School bullies target Leonardo, and his parents are overprotective, particularly his mother. Wanting independence, Leonardo becomes interested in an international exchange programme. He and Gabriel work together on a school project and spend more time in each other's company, neglecting to involve Giovana. Gabriel takes Leonardo to the cinema, and to witness a lunar eclipse. Leonardo finds an exchange programme that will cater for blind people but his mother is furious when she hears that he wants to go away. His father agrees to quell his wife's worries but questions Leonardo's reasons for wanting to go.

At a friend's party, Giovana shuns Leonardo, hurt by the change in their friendship. She kisses Gabriel but he doesn't reciprocate. Giovana saves Leonardo from being humiliated at the party by their classmates, but he misunderstands her motives and reacts angrily; she storms off. After a tense conversation, Gabriel kisses Leonardo. During a subsequent school trip, Gabriel claims that he was too drunk at the party to remember anything that happened. Leonardo and Giovana make up but she is upset when he confesses that he loves Gabriel. After a moonlight swim, Leonardo catches a cold and misses school. Giovana visits him and apologies for her negative reaction. She encourages Gabriel to visit Leonardo. The boys kiss and hold hands at school, in defiance of their mocking classmates.

her mother's funeral, saying that she's "riddled with remorse" because her intellectualism scared her mother, as if warning Leduc off; Leduc is passionately unafraid but it's clear that she has substituted one impossible, beloved, vivid and selfish mother for another. Berthe, her own mother, appears occasionally as a disruptive force, sniffing around Leduc's apartment as if her daughter were still a child. Their relationship is most peaceful when Berthe cares for her daughter on her release from a 'sleep cure' by bathing her, in the first moment of tenderness we've seen Leduc receive.

But whereas de Beauvoir is excited by Leduc's rage against the forces that oppress her, even if she cannot experience it, Berthe is bemused by it, offering the audience a choice of viewpoints. Leduc is unbearable; Devos's performance and the film's selection of biographical incidents – including her refusal to save Sachs after he collaborates – make that clear. But – or therefore – she is also a precursor to the worldwide rage to come, the civil rights movement that would sweep away the stigmas of illegitimacy, abortion, homosexuality. What de Beauvoir analyses in *The Second Sex*, Leduc lives.

Provost, who also directed the César-winning *Séraphine*, about the French 'primitive modernist' painter Séraphine de Senlis, is lucid about the economic dimensions that both drive and constrain Leduc, as they did de Senlis. Both women were self-taught in their fields, and confronted dismissive gatekeepers and markets. Leduc's need to be self-supporting leads her to outspoken behaviour that transgresses middle-class social boundaries – demanding, for example, that a bookseller stock "Leduc's" first book (she is not Leduc, she protests, just an interested reader). Where her friend Jean Genet's behaviour creates a frisson, Leduc's creates disapproval. Even de Beauvoir disapproves: when Leduc sweeps her apartment, a look of pity passes Kiberlain's face, indicating the class barriers that remain; to her, the gesture is not amicable and practical but submissive.

Although the film is centrally about writing, and includes several striking quotations from Leduc's *sui generis* novel-memoirs, it is the gestural language, in tandem with the production design, that most powerfully tells the story. Devos's garish, slightly-too-tight clothing, her heavy tread, her hungry smoking, her frown lines and thrust-forward chin are as telling as the words she writes about her childhood – a childhood impoverished both economically and in terms of affection. The undated, irregular forward motion through Leduc's life mirrors her own ungainly, determined gait and her attention to moments of bodily excess and pain. The *boudin* that she smuggles for Sachs, seen in the pre-credit sequence, is the first of many references to meat as at once the burden that she carries and the material that sustains her. Its visceral vitality contrasts with the cool palette of the film, its Paris greys interrupted only when Leduc discovers the bright greens of Provence, where she finally settles. There's a generational shift between Séraphine's lonely death in an asylum and Leduc's survival, one to which Leduc's own courageous writing about her struggle was key. **S**

White Settlers

United Kingdom 2014
Director: Simeon Halligan
Certificate 15 79m 24s

Reviewed by Kim Newman

Simeon Halligan's follow-up to 2010's *Splintered*, using a stretch of Derbyshire to play Scotland, suggests that the director has a knack for rural British terrors, though the film's grip lessens as too many clichés pop up. The gradual escalation of omens in the first half of *White Settlers* is well managed, as two young, frisky, not-overly-sensitive Londoners are spooked in their new Scottish home by pig-masked stalkers who evoke *Its* (2006) or *The Strangers* (2008). As the terror cogs grind, we notice details – a slightly wary estate agent, a family portrait, mutterings of a plan the 'piggies' are trying to stick to – that indicate this is not simply a case of yokels menacing incomers.

As the title suggests, Sarah and Ed are the real home invaders here. Pollyanna McIntosh, known as the feral mutant who proves less monstrous than her suburban captor in *The Woman* (2011), is an ambiguous heroine, going through the pushed-into-fighting-back routine, battering one of her assailants (possibly fatally) and limping determinedly after she's stepped in the inevitable mantrap. The issue of dispossessed rural folk resenting incomers (a subtext of a whole group of 1970s 'folk horror', from *Straw Dogs* to *Robin Redbreast*) was explicitly raised in Mike Figgis's *Cold Creek Manor* (2003) but isn't really discussed here – it's just a backdrop for a night of terror with a somewhat unsatisfying dawn of bewilderment. ☹



White Settlers

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Rachel Richardson-Jones
Written by
Ian Fenton
Director of Photography
James Swift
Editor
Ewa J. Lind
Production Designer
John Ellis
Composer
John Wygens
Sound Technician
Jim Mulhearn
Costume Designer
John Lindlar

©White Settlers Ltd
Production
Companies

A Not a Number production in association with Lynchpin Productions presents
A White Settlers Limited production for Not a Number Productions Limited in association with Lynchpin Productions
A Simeon Halligan film
Executive Producer
Jeff Barber

Cast
Pollyanna McIntosh
Lee Williams

Ed Chapman
Joanne Mitchell
Flo Douglas
Patrick Daunt
little boy
Dominic Kay
pighead 1
Chris Burns
pighead 2
Jim McCreadie
pighead 3
James Burrows
pighead 4
Stephen Derbyshire
passer-by on phone

In Colour
[1.85:1]

Distributor
Abbey Home
Entertainment

Scotland, present day. English couple Sarah and Ed buy an isolated house that's been repossessed from its long-term owners by a bank. On their first night in the house, they are terrorised by intruders wearing pig-masks. Sarah severely injures one of the attackers by battering his head; she tries to escape but is captured by the intruders and drugged. The next morning, Sarah and Ed wake in a city park, while a Scottish family celebrate in their reclaimed home.

WolfCop

Canada 2014
Director: Lowell Dean
Certificate 15 79m 11s

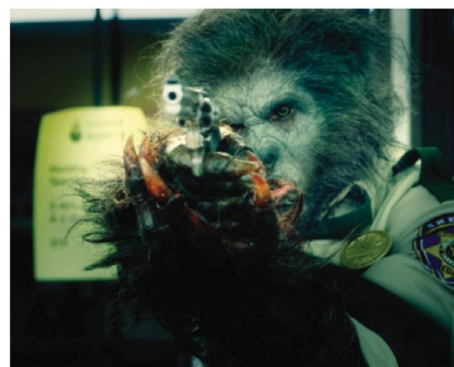
Reviewed by Anton Bitel

"You were late – timing is everything," the Gang Leader (Jesse Moss) tells one of his thugs. "Every second is precious because, you see, time is the one thing that money can't buy."

Timing is crucial to the plot of *WolfCop*, in which a centuries-old conspiracy requires two occult rituals to be carried out in precisely calibrated sequence – one under a full moon, the other during a once-in-a-generation solar eclipse – in order that a trio of ancient shapeshifters can maintain their powers (and powerbase).

The small town of Woodhaven is ruled by stasis, as crime and corruption prevent it from ever moving forward – but when local policeman Lou Garou (played by Leo Fafard and punningly named after the French for 'werewolf'), himself in a rut of alcoholism and fecklessness, wakes up to discover that he is a lycanthrope, this "big fuckin' wolf cop" decides that maybe it is not too late for change.

A sense of belatedness pervades *WolfCop*, directed and co-written by Canadian genre director Lowell Dean (13 *Eerie*). For much as Woodhaven, where drinking and hunting (often combined) seem the principal activities, is a backwards backwoods apparently frozen in time, so too the film's defiantly practical makeup and effects, the synth and guitar score (by Shooting Guns and Toby Bond), the prolonged and hilariously wrong softcore sex scene (choreographed to Lawrence Gowan's 1987 hit *Moonlight Desires*), even the cartoonish hyper-violence and gore, are overtly infused with the retro stylings of Reagan-era horror. The brand of a video camera, CD jukebox or mobile phone may not be quite right for the 80s (or indeed for the present), and expressions such as "pimped your ride" may sound anachronistic in so nostalgic a film, but like its antagonists, who appear young at one moment, old the next, *WolfCop* switches between different ages, until finally Lou can solve the mystery – and overcome



Upholding the paw: Leo Fafard

the legacy – of his late father and move on to a different future of carnage against criminality.

It was an 80s film, John Landis's *An American Werewolf in London* that set the cinematic benchmark for lycanthropic comedy and transformation sequences – although here, significantly, it is not Lou's hands that change first but rather his penis, in keeping with *WolfCop*'s much lower tone. There are other, more interesting innovations too. For a start, in becoming a werewolf, Lou also becomes a better, if more brutal, policeman (as well as a wilder lover). This may echo Paul Verhoeven's similarly titled tale of humanity and hybridity *RoboCop* (1987) but it also reverses a long tradition wherein the werewolf is a force for straightforward animalistic evil – a role instead filled here by the supposed pillars of the Woodhaven community, who turn out to be icky, Icke-ean lizard people. The other novelty is an amusingly mixed message on alcohol, the human Lou's undoing but to his wolfman as spinach is to Popeye. This no doubt reflects the film's target audience, ideally well lubricated to howl with laughter at all the doggedly backward-looking inanity. ☹

Credits and Synopsis

Produced by
Hugh Patterson
Bernie Hernandez
Danielle Masters
Deborah Marks
Written by
Lowell Dean
Director of Photography
Peter La Rocque
Edited by
Michael Geroge
Mark Montague
Production Designer
Justin Ludwig
Music
Shooting Guns
Special Effects
Make-up
Emersen Ziffle
Costume Designer
Brenda Shenher

©Wolf Cop
Productions Inc.
Production Companies
Raven Banner
Entertainment
and CineCoup
Media presents
a Vortex Words +
Pictures Production
in association with
Echolands Creative

Produced with the participation of CineCoup, Vortex, Echolands Creative, Cineplex, CAVCO, Creative Saskatchewan and in association with Superchannel, Bell Fund, Urban Post, RAW, William F Whites, Canada Film Capital, EP Canada, CMPA, Raven Banner
Executive Producers
J. Joly
Brian Wideen
Brad Pelman
Sean Buckley
Bill Marks

Cast
Leo Fafard
Lou Garou, 'WolfCop'
Amy Matysio
Tina Walsh
Sarah Lind
Jessica Barratt
Corinne Conley
Mayor Bradley
Jesse Moss
Earl, gang leader
Jonathan Cherry
Willie Higgins

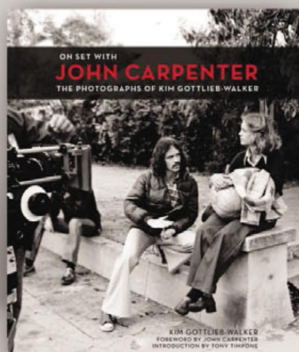
Aidan Devine
Ray, Chief of Police
James Whittingham
coroner
Ryland Alexander
Terry

In Colour
[1.78:1]

Distributor
Studiocanal Limited

Woodhaven, North America. When Lou Garou was 10, his policeman father was killed searching for young Tina's missing father during a solar eclipse. Now, 32 years later, Lou is an alcoholic, ineffectual policeman, working alongside the more industrious Tina. Ordered by the chief to investigate strange nocturnal goings-on in the woods, Lou finds anti-corruption mayoral candidate Terry Wallace strung up – and is then knocked out. Waking the following morning with heightened senses and a pentagram carved into his chest, Lou learns that Terry died of an apparent drug overdose, leading incumbent Mayor Bradley to call off the annual 'Drink 'n' Shoot' event. That evening, while at Jessica's Tooth and Nail Tavern, Lou transforms into a werewolf, and kills two thugs. The next morning, Lou's friend Willie shows him video evidence of his lycanthropy. Lou's library research reveals a legend about shapeshifters sacrificing an innocent to turn a 'village idiot' into a werewolf and then drain his power-giving blood during a solar eclipse. That evening, under Willie's care, Lou transforms again and starts taking his crime-fighting seriously – and violently – as the 'WolfCop'. Jessica has sex with the WolfCop at the police station, before drugging him and revealing that she is, in fact, the shapeshifting Bradley. She, with fellow 200-year-old shapeshifters Willie/the coroner and the chief/the Gang Leader, take Lou to the woods to drain his blood during the total eclipse, but helped by Tina – and alcohol – he kills them all.

Read



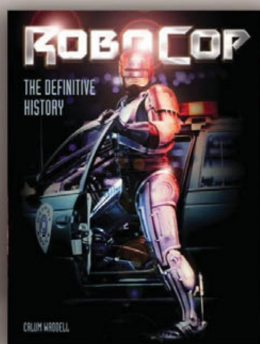
ON SET WITH JOHN CARPENTER

By Kim Gottlieb-Walker, Titan Books, hardback, illustrated, 176pp, £24.99, ISBN 9781783294688

John Carpenter's producing partner Debra Hill hired photographer Kim Gottlieb-Walker as unit photographer on *Halloween*, and Kim went on to shoot stills on the sets of some of Carpenter's most iconic films: *The Fog*, *Escape from New York*, *Halloween II* and *Christine*. Collected here for the first time is the best of that on-set photography, with rare and previously unseen images, accompanied by exclusive commentary from those involved, including Carpenter himself.

With production stills, candid photos of the stars between takes and the crew in action, and portrait shots of actors, this book gives an unprecedented glimpse into life on set with Carpenter.

<http://bit.ly/1DsnjpZ>



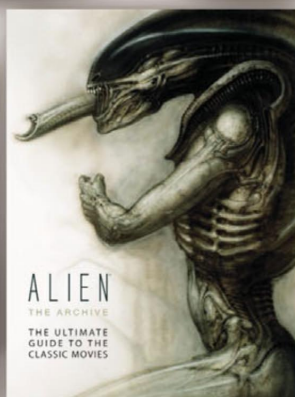
ROBOCOP: THE DEFINITIVE HISTORY

By Calum Waddell, Titan Books, hardback, illustrated, 224pp, £24.95 ISBN 9781783293254

RoboCop is a pop-culture phenomenon. This is the first comprehensive book on the classic franchise, opening with the groundbreaking original, progressing through sequels, TV spin-offs, comics, games and merchandise, to conclude with 2014's blockbuster re-envisioning.

RoboCop: The Definitive History details the journey from original script and concept designs to the art and stunning effects of the newest iteration. It includes rare and exclusive images, script pages, storyboards and more, plus new interviews with key creatives such as writers Ed Neumeier and Michael Miner, director José Padilha, and stars Joel Kinnaman and Nancy Allen. A must-have for movie and sci-fi fans alike.

<http://bit.ly/1ocSbRu>



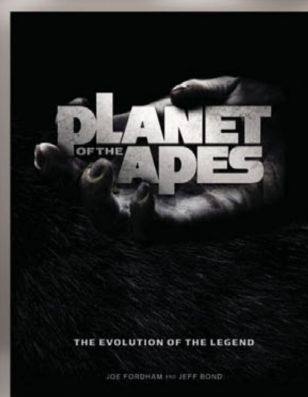
ALIEN: THE ARCHIVE

Edited by Simon Ward, Titan Books, hardback, illustrated, 320pp, £35.00, ISBN 9781783291045

Alien: The Archive is a gorgeous celebration of this landmark series. From earliest script ideas to final cut, the book explores the making of all four films in exhaustive detail. It features storyboards from Ridley Scott, exclusive concept designs from Ron Cobb and Syd Mead, imagery of the xenomorphs being created, deleted scenes, unused ideas, costumes, weapons and more. The book also includes new interviews with Ridley Scott, Sigourney Weaver, H.R. Giger, Jean-Pierre Jeunet, Jenette Goldstein and more.

A book for fans of *Alien*, art lovers, and cinema and science-fiction historians, *Alien: The Archive* is the final word on the series and showcases the creation of a terrifying and beautiful filmic nightmare.

<http://bit.ly/1rhbBcs>



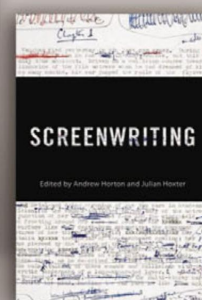
PLANET OF THE APES: THE EVOLUTION OF THE LEGEND

By Joe Fordham and Jeff Bond, Titan Books, hardback, illustrated, 256pp, £29.99, ISBN 9781783291984

This lavish history celebrates every entry in the *Planet of the Apes* series, tracing its development from Pierre Boulle's source novel and the Charlton Heston original to Andy Serkis's groundbreaking motion-capture work in *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* and *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes*.

The first book to cover all the films, television spin-offs, merchandise and more, it features exclusive archival material, such as early make-up tests, script pages, production art, costume designs and posters, interviews with crew members and unseen artwork. *Planet of the Apes: The Evolution of the Legend* is the only exhaustive account of the legendary franchise.

<http://bit.ly/1mAF8hv>



SCREENWRITING Behind the Silver Screen, Volume 2

Edited by Andrew Horton and Julian Hoxter, I.B. Tauris, 224pp, hardback £58, ISBN 9781784530204, paperback £14.99 ISBN 9781784530211

Screenwriting is where a movie begins. Written by screenwriters and critics, this innovative book is devoted to the art of the screenwriter and the business of screenwriting from Hollywood's silent beginnings to the global multimedia marketplace. Focusing on key screenplays that changed the game in Hollywood and beyond, and on films from *The Birth of a Nation* to *Chinatown* and *Lost in Translation*, the book reveals the profound ways in which screenwriters contribute to films, as they try to capture the hopes and dreams, the nightmares and concerns of their times. It is compelling reading for film lovers and anyone interested in the collaboration that creates the movies we see on the screen.

<http://bit.ly/1wFp9X>

Home cinema



Messing with his head: George Cole and Peter Halliday in the *Out of the Unknown* episode 'The Last Lonely Man'

BRAVE NEW WORDS

With scripts by the likes of Isaac Asimov and J.G. Ballard, a 1960s BBC series used sci-fi to explore daring issues of the day

OUT OF THE UNKNOWN

UK 1965-71; BFI/Region 2 DVD; Certificate 15; 1,323 minutes; 1.33:1; Features: 'Return of the Unknown' (2014 documentary with clips from lost episodes), audio commentaries with cast, crew and experts, archival interview with director James Cellan Jones, episode reconstructions, film insert from 'Deathday' episode, stills galleries, illustrated booklet

Reviewed by Kim Newman

The relative inaccessibility of British back-catalogue television is a scandal almost on a level with the fact that so much important material was destroyed. Releases such as the BFI's DVD issue of (what remains of) the BBC2 science-fiction anthology drama show *Out of the Unknown* (1965-71) go some way towards remedying the situation. Comparable American efforts such as *The Twilight Zone* (1959-64) and *The Outer Limits* (1963-65) have been available in multiple formats since the dawn of home video, and were often rerun on television – even in the

UK – while *Out of the Unknown*, after its single set of repeats, was quietly buried in the vaults. More than half the episodes were junked, including adaptations of major works by John Wyndham ('Random Quest') and Clifford D. Simak ('Beach Head') and original plays by Nigel Kneale ('The Chopper') and William Trevor ('Walk's End').

Studio-based and shot on video with the odd film insert, the *Out of the Unknown* dramas have a quality distinct from the *noirish* film look of the American shows. Many of the actors, directors and writers rounded up for the commentary tracks on this BFI release (moderated by the well-informed Toby Hadoke) opine that the experience was closer to theatre than film. Elements of performance and production style that tend to get lampooned come with the territory. Some of these shows ambitiously depict future worlds, spaceships or far-off planets with no more resources than would have been available to plays about three people arguing in a contemporary kitchen, so a certain licence is necessary – but when was the last time a theatre critic said they couldn't take *Macbeth* seriously because of non-contact fight scenes, or cavilled at 'wobbly' sets that don't actually move but are self-evidently sets rather than locations?

Under the aegis of Sydney Newman, head of drama at ABC, producer Irene Shubik devised the format that became *Out of the Unknown* for the ITV drama series *Out of This World* (1962, and also forthcoming on DVD from the BFI), itself a spinoff from the long-running *Armchair Theatre* slot (1956-74). *Armchair Theatre* managed the odd essay in science fiction: Patrick McGooohan twice played an astronaut on the show, in adaptations of James Thurber's 'The Greatest Man in the World' (1958) and Donal Giltinan's original play 'The Man Out There' (1961), while David Perry's black comedy 'The Trouble with Our Ivy' (1961) was a smarter, nastier blueprint for 1965's *Out of the Unknown* episode 'Come Buttercup, Come Daisy, Come...?' and the creeping-vine segment of the film *Dr Terror's House of Horrors*.

Influenced by American anthology shows, *Out of This World* had a host (Boris Karloff) but otherwise presented self-contained episodes, mostly adapted from published short stories and novels by well-known SF writers. There were American precedents in *Tales of Tomorrow* (1951-53) and *Science Fiction Theater* (1955-57), which themselves drew on radio series such as *Dimension X* (1950-51), but the tendency of SF television in the US was to favour original

scripts over adaptations. Rod Serling mostly relied on his own scripts for *The Twilight Zone*, only occasionally turning to science-fiction writers such as Richard Matheson and Charles Beaumont, who were proficient screenwriters as well as published authors.

When Newman and Shubik moved to the BBC, they decided to do *Out of This World* again as *Out of the Unknown*. One episode in series three, Leon Griffiths's adaptation of Rog Phillips's 'The Yellow Pill', reused a script from the earlier show; this process of passing on continued when Michael J. Bird's 'The Uninvited', from series four, showed up on *Hammer House of Mystery and Suspense* as 'In Possession' (1985). *Out of the Unknown* lacks a host, though the BBC considered hiring Vincent Price, but it does have one of the visually and aurally surreal radiophonic title sequences mandatory for 1960s telefantasy.

Serling turned to science fiction/fantasy when frustrated by growing resistance to issue-based drama, realising that he could get away with telling a story about racism if it was about robots being lynched on Mars rather than African-Americans suffering in Mississippi. Newman and Shubik came to the genre in a different cultural environment. UK TV was relatively happy in the 1960s to tackle controversial subject matter, and there was a well-established tradition of literary science fiction thanks to Wells, Huxley and Orwell. Kingsley Amis's influential *New Maps of Hell: A Survey of Science Fiction* (1960) took SF seriously in a way no comparable American writer would have – Amis's book might even have served as a shopping list for Shubik and Newman when it came to selecting works for adaptation.

That *Out of the Unknown* was interested in previously published stories suggests the cultural value British television invested in literary adaptation, from crime dramas based on Simenon and Doyle to benchmark serials wrought from John Galsworthy or Dickens. Even science fiction, considered a lowly relation of literature, gained respect if it appeared in print first. American science-fiction writers who grumbled that Serling took their ideas and passed them off as his own without payment or credit must have envied the way John Wyndham, John Brunner and J.G. Ballard were treated by the BBC. Americans Isaac Asimov, Robert Sheckley, William Tenn, Clifford Simak, C.M. Kornbluth and Frederik Pohl scored credits (sometimes multiple credits) on *Out of the Unknown*, while their work went ignored in America. Asimov was especially favoured, with six stories adapted (including a novel, *The Naked Sun*); reading between the lines, it seems that the author was very taken with Shubik, though he only granted rights on condition the adaptations not be shown in America.

Given that the lag between written and filmed science fiction is notoriously marked, it's unsurprising that *Out of the Unknown* should now seem ahead of its time. Ballard's 'Thirteen to Centaurus', Pohl's 'Tunnel Under the World', Rog Phillips's 'The Yellow Pill' and Colin Kapp's 'Lambda 1' are typical SF magazine stories of their time, but their ideas took so long to percolate into movies that these adaptations seem like rough



'Sucker Bait', by Isaac Asimov

drafts for the elaborate timeslips and artificial worlds of *Groundhog Day* (1993), *The Truman Show* (1998), *The Matrix* (1999) and *Inception* (2010).

Philip K. Dick, the one author from the generation of writers preferred by Shubik who has become a popular source for cinema, was used for *Out of This World* ('Imposter') but oddly not *Out of the Unknown*. Ray Bradbury, the first American SF writer to gain literary cachet, was adapted once ('The Fox and the Forest') but insisted on an exorbitant fee for every repeat – which led to the loss of the episode. (*The Twilight Zone* also only turned to Bradbury once, though later whole radio and TV series would plunder his catalogue.) In the second season, for added prestige, Shubik bought in scripts based on science fiction by major names that had stalled as stand-alone TV or film projects: Kenneth Cavender and Clive Donner's adaptation of E.M. Forster's 'The Machine Stops' and J.B. Priestley's adaptation of Mordecai Roshwald's 'Level Seven'.

Throughout, the stress is on engaged, relevant material. Over the course of the series,

There are great moments of SF/fantasy/horror television here, where emotion and conceptual breakthrough coexist

Out of the Unknown pondered nuclear war, consumerism, post-colonial malaise, population control, psychedelia (especially when BBC2 began producing in eye-popping colour) and an expansionist future in space that seemed imminent with the race to the moon of the 1960s. For the fourth season, produced after the moon landing had supposedly rendered spacefaring SF obsolete, Shubik's successor Alan Bromly retooled the format, staying away from adaptations save for Brian Hayles's take on Angus Hall's novel *Deathday*. Bromly commissioned a mix of original supernatural dramas (including the astonishingly ill-conceived 'To Lay a Ghost' and the tragically missing 'The Chopper') and earthbound identity-crisis SF ('This Body Is Mine', 'The Man in My Head'), turning the show away from satire towards horror but still riding the zeitgeist.

On the whole, *Out of the Unknown*'s essays in comedy – 'Come Buttercup, Come Daisy, Come...?' or Pohl's 'The Midas Plague' – wear less well than the paranoid-puzzle or mindwarp-based episodes. There are great moments of SF/fantasy/horror television here, where emotion (usually, but not exclusively, terror) and conceptual breakthrough coexist and the familiar faces of UK TV drama find themselves in worlds far beyond the pubs, police stations, emergency wards and drawing rooms that were their usual stamping grounds – Sylvia Coleridge using a time-viewing machine to obsess over her dead daughter in 'The Dead Past', suburbanite Ronald Hines living the same day over and over blighted by pestilential advertising in 'Tunnel Under the World', decent George Cole semi-possessed by neurotic nagging bore Peter Halliday in 'The Last Lonely Man', meek scientist John Carson and ruthless businessman Jack Hedley swapping (and ruining) lives in 'This Body Is Mine'.

The surviving episodes are augmented by reconstructions of a sampling of the lost material – the audio played over skilful montages – and the commentaries, a documentary and the booklet provide a great deal of intriguing context for the programme. 5



'The Midas Plague' by Frederik Pohl

New releases

THE 'BURBS

Joe Dante; USA 1989; Arrow Films/Region B Blu-ray; Certificate 12; 102 minutes; 1.85:1; Features: audio commentary with writer Dana Olsen, making-of documentary, original workprint cut of film with deleted and alternate scenes, video featurette comparing workprint and theatrical cut, alternate ending, theatrical trailer, essay booklet

Reviewed by Kate Stables

"*The 'Burbs* is as empty as a movie can be without creating a vacuum," said the *New York Times* on the film's release. Granted, Joe Dante's sly, slapsticky take on the spooky-neighbour subgenre is broad, noisy and good-natured. It's a movie whose colour composition and gleeful film-geekery (everything from *The Sentinel* to Mario Bava gets a nod) are as amped up as its premise. But as with the horror-comedy of Dante's *Gremlins* (1984), there's a pointed if jovial attack on suburban complacency lurking under the pratfalls. Tom Hanks's nosy, hilariously self-righteous posse of burglarising, property-trashing neighbours, attempting to smoke out suspicious new family the Klopeks, are gradually satirised as picket-fence paranoiacs. That Sergio Leone-styled stride to the Klopeks' front door (even the dog gets a narrow-eyed close-up) shows up the macho delusions of the men of Mayfield Place.

Dante, who took scriptwriter Dana Olsen's *Rear Window* spoof and turned it into a high-spirited mix of retro Universal Horror homage, physical yucks and comedy of errors, is frank in the extras about the film's problem ending. "You can't kill Tom Hanks" was the studio's verdict on the original version. Now the curious, completist viewer can pick over at their leisure the alternate endings and weigh up the differences between the final cut and Dante's workprint, which is thoughtfully also included in this release.

Disc: A pleasing transfer neatly captures the film's just-louder-than-real colour palette. Jerry Goldsmith's teasing score shows up nicely too (please note the *Patton* parody in Bruce Dern's musical motif).

CASTAWAY

Nicolas Roeg; UK 1986; Pulp Video/Region 2 DVD; 112 minutes; 1.85:1; Features: trailer

Reviewed by David Thompson

Nicolas Roeg's *Castaway* (not to be confused with the Tom Hanks film) is derived from the bestselling account by Lucy Irvine of her year spent with Gerald Kingsland on the deserted island of Tuin in the Torres Strait. Kingsland, an adventurer who numbered among his professions editorship of a leading porn magazine, advertised in *Time Out* for a 'Wife' – the inverted commas carrying heavy significance – to live with him in paradisiacal self-sufficiency. The successful applicant for the position was Irvine, who had a history as a runaway and was bored with her life as a clerk in London. As she later described it, what she was interested in was a "partner, not a passion". The much older Kingsland clearly had other ideas, and their stay proved a bumpy ride, he frustrated by her withholding of any sexual congress, and she infuriated by his laziness.

Roeg saw the real-life saga as "20 years of marriage concentrated into one year". There are obvious parallels with the reduction of human relationships acted out against an isolated,



Strangers in paradise: *Castaway*

ferociously natural environment in Roeg's 1971 film *Walkabout*, as well as the conflict of two people with totally different viewpoints and expectations of life as experienced in *Bad Timing* (1980). Critics were generally down on the film for lacking the visual intensity of the former and the complex montage of the latter, but even in this more 'approachable' linear story, Roeg uncompromisingly refuses to sentimentalise the situation.

Although ostensibly based on Irvine's book, the film (scripted by frequent collaborator Allan Scott) strives to be even-handed in its attitude to the two characters, underlining the generational gap and revealing Lucy to be ultimately more in tune with the island than the supposedly more practical Gerald. In the latter role, Oliver Reed gives one of his most convincing performances, his chauvinistic, bullish tendencies offset by a strong sense of humour. Newcomer Amanda Donohoe braves the regular – and authentic – nudity with total confidence while preserving an enigmatic quality as Lucy.

Castaway ran into financial problems during the shoot (not on Tuin but in the Seychelles) and was rescued by the then thriving company Cannon. Since its brief release it has not been an easy film to see, with no DVD in the US or UK (the disc under review is from Italy).

The opening credits are accompanied by a specially composed song by Kate Bush, 'Be Kind to My Mistakes' (the title echoing Gerald's last words to Lucy). Curiously enough, Roeg originally wanted Bush to play the Irvine character. If that had happened, *Castaway* could have made an especially interesting addition to the roster of performances by rock stars in Roeg's cinema.

Disc: A decent transfer in widescreen, though not anamorphic. The menu options allow for viewing the film in English without Italian subtitles.

A FAREWELL TO ARMS

Frank Borzage; USA 1932; BFI/Region X Blu-ray and DVD Dual Format; Certificate PG; 85 minutes; 1.33:1; Features: alternate ending (1932), newsreels ('War Scenes in Italy', 'Austrian Prisoners in a Concentration Camp', 'The Latest Crime of the Sinister Hun'), 'Frank Borzage Talks to Cecil B. DeMille' radio interview from 1937, essay booklet with contributions from Geoff Andrew, Adrian Wootton and Kent Jones

Reviewed by Kate Stables

"I believe in trying to reach the heart," Frank Borzage tells Cecil B. DeMille in a charming sliver of a 1937 radio interview included with this covetable release. ("You do something to

our innards," was the equally body-conscious remark that prompted this revelation.) Borzage's heartfelt quality, rather than Hemingway's spare immediacy, is what blazes through this lushly melodramatic adaptation. It's a fine example of the director's now deeply unfashionable taste for redemptive rapture, yet its close-miked, pre-Hays Code seduction banter between ambulance driver Gary Cooper and Helen Hayes's brittle, bereaved nurse feels unexpectedly intimate and modern.

As with Borzage's silent masterpieces *7th Heaven* (1927) and *Street Angel* (1928), the film's sentimentality hides a dogged streak of social radicalism, with transcendent love legitimising a wartime affair's supposed immorality (in this case pre-marital sex and an illegitimate birth). It's an unabashedly lovely piece, full of shimmering close-ups (the camera drinks in Cooper as if committing him to memory) and memorable compositions (that ecstatic stretcher-view, running from a painted dome to Hayes's brimming eye, or the stockinged legs that bisect Cooper and Adolphe Menjou's table talk).

World War I, whose bombs, broken bodies and campaign reverses stud the narrative, winds around rather than in front of the love story, admittedly. But it permeates all, from the heroine's fiancé, who "didn't have a sabre cut... they blew him to bits", to the grief-crazed final *Liebestod* in which the armistice bells peal an end to everything. None of the excellent essays in the booklet (Kent Jones's Borzage career overview is a considerable boon) gives a close reading of the thundering desertion montage, though one itches for a discussion of whether its expressionist imagery was, as the cinematographer José Luis Alcaine recently suggested, the shrieking, strafing inspiration for Picasso's *Guernica*.

Disc: An impressive, nicely sheeny transfer is accompanied by a well-chosen handful of extras. The film's alternative happier ending is intriguing, as much for what it doesn't change as what it does (Hemingway wrote 47 possible endings, after all). Three WWI newsreels add some welcome context.

THE GANG'S ALL HERE

Busby Berkeley; USA 1943; Eureka/Masters of Cinema/Region B Blu-ray; 103 minutes; 1.37:1; Features: commentary by Glenn Kenny, Farran Smith Nehme and Ed Hulse, 'Busby Berkeley – A Journey with a Star', deleted scene, trailer, booklet

Reviewed by David Thompson

'Alice in Wonderland' could be the subtitle of this Fox wartime extravaganza, which was a combined vehicle for studio musical star Alice Faye, jazz sensation Benny Goodman and the incomparable director/choreographer Busby Berkeley. Berkeley of course made his name through his delirious and lavish dance numbers in such 30s Warner Bros musicals as *Gold Diggers of 1933* and *Footlight Parade*, then moved to MGM to direct mainly Mickey Rooney/Judy Garland movies. In spite of the huge success of these films, Berkeley's career floundered, with his notoriety for going over budget and over schedule and the alcoholism that almost landed him in jail after a fatal car crash. In 1943 Darryl F. Zanuck brought him to Fox to work for the first time in Technicolor, with spectacular results.

Although *The Gang's All Here* was mainly conceived as part of the war effort – the climactic musical show is put on to sell war bonds to the rich, and the central male character is a serviceman who serves briefly in the Far East – the presence of Brazilian star Carmen Miranda signals how the South American market had become very important to Hollywood. With European distribution heavily restricted, the US's 'Good Neighbor Policy' is to the fore, with the import of coffee and bananas featuring heavily. The latter are the central subject of the film's most infamous number, 'The Lady in the Tutti Frutti Hat', in which chorus girls play with giant, phallic bananas and which culminates in classic overhead Berkeley shots of opening and closing flower patterns and the absurd image of Miranda's ever-expanding hat.

Although forgotten for decades, *The Gang's All Here* was revived in the early 70s for a new audience whose intake of hallucinogenic drugs made them well disposed to Berkeley's crazy colour imagery. The final 'Polka-Dot Polka' number features neon hoops, reverse motion and a wild kaleidoscopic sequence that in its psychedelic abstraction feels closer to the aesthetics of American underground cinema than a Hollywood production. See it and still be amazed.

Disc: An excellent transfer. The shared commentary is engaging and very informative.

JUGGERNAUT

Richard Lester; UK 1974; Kino Lorber/Region A Blu-ray/Region 1 NTSC DVD; 126 minutes; 1.66:1

Reviewed by Michael Atkinson

One of the more dignified and sensible of the early-70s disaster cycle – almost Cowardesque compared to the likes of *Earthquake* and *The*

Towering Inferno – this unlikely Richard Lester showboat packs us on to a luxury liner full of ambivalent vacationers and captained by Omar Sharif, whereupon everyone is notified that there are bombs on board and the whole caboodle is being held for ransom. With the clock ticking, a defusing team led by IRA vet Richard Harris is parachuted in – a manoeuvre in stormy seas that claims lives all by itself – while the bureaucrats back in London (Anthony Hopkins, Ian Holm, Kenneth Colley) scramble over clues to find the maniac responsible.

It does not go well, despite Harris's confident *savoir faire*, and though the film is light on the stuntwork and analogue set effects the subgenre was famous for, it oozes personality and irony, with Roy Kinnear's buffoonish master of frolic and ceremonies keeping up a Herculean litany of party gestures for the depressed and traumatised passengers, Shirley Knight mooning about looking delicious as Sharif's semi-secret onboard romance, and Caroline Mortimer (of those Mortimers) teetering on the edge of a breakdown as Hopkins's unstable wife.

The Lester touches bubble up amid the efficiently crafted suspense – red herrings abound (one inordinately freaked passenger is dashing through shots so often you guess he's the culprit), the passengers' devastated anomie is played for ghastly laughs, Roshan Seth's London cabin boy puts on a Bengali accent only when addressing the clientele, and the luxuriantly rich cast (add in David Hemmings, Michael Hordern, Cyril Cusack, Freddie Jones, Julian Glover and corpulent mega-American Clifton James) juice up the gearwork with frayed suppression and unexplained emotional turbulence. (After years of eager supporting work, Hopkins comes into his own neurotic self here.)

Of course the focus is on the bomb mechanics, which are more seasoned and convincing than the many dozen *Die Hard*-ish scenarios to arise in Hollywood in the 80s and 90s.

Disc: Fine Blu-ray transfer but no supplements, always a shame where Lester is concerned.

MACBETH

Roman Polanski; USA/UK 1971; Criterion Collection/Region A Blu-ray; 140 minutes; 2.35:1; Features: 'Toil and Trouble: Making Macbeth', 'Polanski Meets Macbeth', screenwriter Kenneth Tynan on 'The Dick Cavett Show', segment from 1972 'Aquarius' featuring Polanski and Peter Coe

Reviewed by Nick Pinkerton

When Roman Polanski's movie of the Scottish Play opened at the Playboy Theater in New York – it was produced by Hugh Hefner, you see – the few reviewers who bothered to address it at all tended to get only as far as its terrible violence, interpreted as a way for Polanski to purge the still-recent memory of the murder of his wife and unborn child. What impresses the viewer today, however, is the study of "vaulting ambition" by two men who knew of which they spake, having come from marginal backgrounds to make themselves central to the culture industry. I am talking about Kenneth Peacock Tynan, who pruned down Shakespeare's text, and the man he'd once described as a "cocksure Polish gnome", Polanski.

"His aim is quite simply to be invulnerable, physically as well as psychologically," Tynan wrote of Polanski – which recalls us to Macbeth's own conviction of his invincibility, until the moment before he is dispatched by Macduff. In Polanski's version, this *coup de grâce* severs the king's head clean from his body, accompanied by copious gouts of gore. The film's unceasing blood-and-mire is part of Polanski's rigorous realism, as ever a backdrop against which his surreal flourishes – the Salvator Rosa-esque scenes in the witches' coven, a hurtling *mise en abyme* through an infinity of mirrors, the shambling, inexorable march of Great Birnam Wood to Dunsinane Hill – can stand in stark relief. This realism extends to the film's treatment of iambic pentameter – Polanski and Tynan confine many of the play's most famous soliloquies to interior monologues, and his unusually young Lord and Lady Macbeth (Jon Finch and Francesca Annis) confer in a hissed hush that's entirely free of stagey bombast.

No scene is approached haphazardly, and as Macbeth's courtier yes-men fall away to leave him alone in the prison of his greatness, the movie reveals its full magisterial depths. It is, of course, a bowdlerisation – as any proper cinematic interpretation of a text must necessarily be.

Disc: Leaden skies glower in a Todd-AO widescreen frame, in a restoration supervised by the Polish gnome himself. An imposter like *Game of Thrones* should cower in shame.

THE MEDUSA TOUCH

Jack Gold; UK/France 1978; Network/Region B Blu-ray; 105 minutes; Certificate PG; 1.78:1; Features: commentary, production featurette, trailer, gallery

Reviewed by Michael Brooke

According to writer James A. Conrad, just three mainstream English-language films dealt with telekinesis prior to the success of



A Farewell to Arms Borzage's heartfelt quality, rather than Hemingway's spare immediacy, is what blazes through this lushly melodramatic adaptation

Television

RED SHIFT

BBC; UK 1978; BFI/Region 2 DVD; Certificate 12; 84 minutes; 1:33:1. Features: interviews with crew, 1980 documentary 'Spirit of Cheshire', 1972 feature 'One Pair of Eyes'; Alan Garner – All Systems Go; illustrated booklet

Reviewed by Robert Hanks

If you ever want to feel thoroughly depressed about the state of current British television drama, a quick glance at the roster for *Play for Today* in the late 70s should do it: *Blue Remembered Hills*, *Licking Hitler*, *Comedians*, *Abigail's Party*, Loach, Apted, Joffé, Poliakoff, Rosenthal, D. Edgar, C. Churchill, B. Keefe, Leon Minder Griffiths... Even in this company, *Red Shift* is extraordinary: a combination of adolescent romance, historical drama and science fiction adapted by Alan Garner from his 1973 novel and directed by John Mackenzie, two years before *The Long Good Friday*.

As in Garner's *The Owl Service*, stories from the present and the distant past are intertwined, and in this case they are all set in the same part of Garner's native Cheshire. In the present day, beside the M6, Tom (caustic Stephen Petcher) is an intellectually brilliant boy cramped physically and morally by his working-class background – his salvation is his girlfriend Jan (a radiant Lesley Dunlop) but she is away in London. As the strain on them begins to tell, Tom's pain reaches Macey, a Roman legionary and some kind of berserker, trapped with his comrades among hostile tribes, and Thomas, an epileptic visionary whose village faces attack by the king's troops during the English Civil War.

The time scheme and elaborate, allusive dialogue of the novel are heavily simplified but the play nevertheless remains baffling in places, though the cast – including James Hazeldine and Michael Elphick – take it in their stride, and the queasy undertones of sexual disgust, Tom's tragic jealousy and self-destructiveness and the outbursts of clumsily choreographed violence are vivid and unsettling.

Disc: An impressive transfer from 16mm film. Garner's autobiographical essay from 1972 is even stranger than the feature, and more satisfying.

SGT BILKO: THE PHIL SILVERS SHOW – THE COMPLETE COLLECTION

CBS; USA 1954-59; Mediumrare/Region 2 DVD; 4,290 minutes; Certificate PG; 4:3. Features: 32-page booklet, audio commentary, Phil Silvers interviews, 'lost' footage, original commercials, episode of 'The Lucy Show' guest-starring Silvers, featurettes

Reviewed by Robert Hanks

We treat screen-acting – TV and cinema – as one thing, theatre as something else. But from the point of view of the actor, TV can seem closer to theatre: the small screen – and historically, it could be a very small screen – can stand or even demand a degree of exaggeration, of hamming, that would be intolerable on the big screen. Watching Phil Silvers as Sergeant Bilko, you can see his roots in Vaudeville, the qualities that made him a hit on Broadway (he got a Tony in 1952 for *Top Banana*, a satirical musical about the brand-new business of television) and confined him to supporting roles in Hollywood.



The Phil Silvers Show Silvers didn't do low-key or letting the lines do the work: he was all about putting over the gag, all snap, mugging and razzmatazz

Silvers didn't do low-key or letting the lines do the work: he was all about putting over the gag, all snap, mugging and razzmatazz. He's a shameless ham but never a ponderous one, rat-a-tatting out the lines, face flitting from rage to ingratiation to manly determination to despair to bluster to more ingratiation: the work that must have gone into that.

The series started out as *You'll Never Get Rich* (it's a line from the song 'You're in the Army Now': 'You'll never get rich/From digging a ditch' is the version sung here, though in an interview included with this set Silvers says that originally "rich" rhymed with something else); you can see why they switched to *The Phil Silvers Show*.

Sixty years on, the series is still a marvellous exhibition of comic self-assurance (the absence of which was the main reason the 1996 Steve Martin film version stank). The assurance is derived partly from the smart set-up – a motor pool in a Midwestern army camp in a gap between wars provides a good mix of variety and sameness, of fresh marks for Master Sgt Ernest G. Bilko RA15 042 269, plus a fruitful sense of confinement (cf *Porridge*, one sitcom that learnt a lot from Bilko).

Assurance derives, too, from theatrical roots. Bilko is an ancient comic stereotype, the loveable rogue – "a gambler, a sharpster, a promoter", as the camp chaplain calls him in the first episode of season one, 'The New Recruits'. But the

rogueishness operates within well-defined limits: it's rare for Bilko to actively lie or con – he sits back and lets greed and self-deception do the job for him; and when the chaplain entrusts him with a bunch of rookies to look after, he finds himself, against all his instincts, acting as a father figure. Compared with modern sitcoms – the egoism and self-indulgence that underlie the comedy of *Seinfeld*, *Friends* or *The Big Bang Theory* – *Bilko's* morality is positively Sunday school.

The concatenation of talent around Silvers is impressive: a solid supporting cast (notably Paul Ford as the anxious authority figure Colonel Hall, Harvey Lembeck and Allan Melvin as Bilko's interchangeable sidekicks, Lenny and Carl *avant la lettre*), fine scripts, high production values and even varied and inventive music by John Strauss.

The first two seasons (1954-56), which were mostly overseen by Nat Hiken, are the best. The momentum lasted into season three but an attempt to freshen things up for season four, transferring the action to California, signalled a loss of direction, and it is almost a relief to know that the show would soon be cancelled.

Disc: Fairly crisp transfers. The accompanying features are useful and enjoyable, though arrogance and disappointment made Silvers an unedifying interviewee. Sadly, the footage from the 1959 'Keep in Step' variety special does not include Diana Dors. **S**

New releases

Carrie (1976). By contrast, 1978 alone saw five, of which this was the Anglo-French effort (the others being *The Fury*, *The Initiation of Sarah*, *Jennifer* and *Patrick*). Co-production deals explain the incongruous presence of the great Lino Ventura as a French detective investigating an entirely British crime (there's a throwaway line about policing job-swaps in Common Market Europe which, perhaps wisely, isn't explored further), but he's always a pleasure to watch – and indeed he gets considerably more screen time than the top-billed Richard Burton.

Burton plays novelist John Morlar, whose frenzied scribbles suggest a decidedly apocalyptic view of human existence – and who is fully aware that his telekinetic powers can help nudge things along in that direction. He's mostly seen in flashback, since the investigation concerns an attempted murder that has left him comatose (albeit with an inexplicably and increasingly active brain), and much of the film is a straightforward police procedural, perhaps more enjoyable now than then because of the glaringly 1970s trappings (and also more unnerving: the various Morlar-triggered catastrophes seem to anticipate the Chernobyl meltdown, the Challenger disaster and 9/11). Morlar is clearly the villain of the piece (understatement) but it's hard not to be swept along by his disgust with so-called civilisation, articulated most forcefully in a courtroom speech during his earlier career as a barrister.

Admittedly, neither the above nor an unusually strong supporting cast (bluff Harry Andrews, tremulous Michael Hordern, camp Derek Jacobi, sceptical Gordon Jackson, ice queen Lee Remick) comes anywhere close to elevating this above the level of pure hokum (on the telekinesis-movie quality scale, it's closer to *The Fury* than *Carrie*), but when director Jack Gold admits on the commentary that he enjoyed watching it again more than he expected to, it's easy to see where he's coming from.

Disc: A crisp high-definition transfer with no significant blemishes. The extras are recycled from the old DVD edition, the highlight being a chatty commentary by Gold in conversation with Stephen Jones and S&S contributor Kim Newman. There's also footage of the climactic cathedral collapse being filmed, including a megaphoned admonition to the crowd of extras: "Remember, no laughing or giggling!"

OUTER SPACE: THREE COSMIC TALES FROM THE CHILDREN'S FILM FOUNDATION

**SUPERSONIC SAUCER/
KADOYNG/THE GLITTERBALL**

UK 1956/72/77; BFI/Region 2 DVD: 48/58/54 minutes; 1.33:1 / 1.66:1 / 1.85:1; Features: booklet

Reviewed by Kim Newman

It is highly unlikely that Steven Spielberg, growing up in America with a Captain Video cardboard space helmet and a Captain Midnight decoder ring, was ever exposed to the genteel efforts of the Children's Film Foundation... and yet, the three films collected here happen to have exactly the same premise as *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*, which Spielberg devised and directed in 1982: an alien, stranded on Earth

and befriended by children, uses extra-human abilities to overcome local difficulties.

Only in *The Glitterball* (1977), directed by Harley Cokeliss, does the alien have E.T.'s overriding desire to go home, with a plot revolving around kids who have to rescue the very odd being (a multipurpose sentient ball-bearing) from a human villain (Ron Pember's thieving window cleaner) so that it can return to the mothership. The aliens in the other two films – Meba in S.G. Fergusson's *Supersonic Saucer* (1956) and the eponymous Kadoyng (Leo Maguire, who also scripted) in Ian Shand's 1972 film – are unselfish if not always competent. They stow any complaints about being marooned on Earth – Meba has become lost while on a test-of-maturity flight, Kadoyng has been rejected by his perfect society – and pitch in to help the children thwart a band of robbers intent on stealing the school cups (the nasty handyman is in on it) and a gaggle of politicians and developers who want to plough a motorway through the Ambridge-like rural village idyll of Byway.

The aliens here are genuinely, and uniquely, alien. The Venusian Meba is a sentient flying saucer (another idea Spielberg hit on later, in **batteries not included**) who unrolls like a giant condom into a burqa/ghost-sheet creature with (as Alex Davidson's booklet essay notes) "disarmingly long Liz Taylor lashes". Part puppet, part cartoon, Meba is nevertheless invested with a distinctive personality, which meshes with some boarding-school kids who have to stay on at school during the holidays (Scandinavian and South American girls and the headmaster's son).

Kadoyng, whose spaceship resembles a giant Easter egg, is a humanoid man-child with a plant-like phallic tentacle sprouting from his skull; this has to be concealed under a top hat or woolly cap, making him look like a fugitive folk-rocker – his supposedly perfect race may have expelled him for being a literal dickhead.

By 1972, cynicism has crept in and the alien uses his powers to make a politician (Michael Sharvell-Martin) speak what's really in his mind, offering "lower prices, *vincent* prices, for all" among other gobbledegook non-justifications for wrecking the local quality of life. By comparison, *The Glitterball*'s tiny spherical alien devours crisps and fruit in pleasingly Svankmajerish animation sequences and can be persuaded to open safes... but it is such an odd creation that, as with the equivalent mineral



Mind games: *The Medusa Touch*

forms of *The Magnetic Monster* (1953) or *Kronos* (1957), it's hard not to wonder whether it's a threat to all life on Earth rather than a pet.

Despite some SF pedigree – *Supersonic Saucer* is based on a story by H.G. Wells's son Frank – these all use the fantasy template of *Five Children and It*, with alien visitors who dispense miracles (sometimes over-literally, to educational or comic effect) the way magic beings such as E. Nesbit's Psammead do in more traditional children's fantasies.

Disc: Excellent transfers of hitherto hard-to-see films: *Supersonic Saucer* is in cool 1950s black-and-white, while *Kadoyng* and *The Glitterball* are in vivid 1970s colour. The excellent booklet has contributions from Vic Pratt, Robert Shail, Alex Davidson and Harley Cokeliss.

THE PARTY

Blake Edwards; USA 1968; Kino Lorber/Region A Blu-ray; 99 minutes; 2.35:1; Features: 'Inside the Party' and 'The Party Revolution' featurettes, original theatrical trailer, profiles of Blake Edwards and producers Walter Mirisch and Ken Wales

Reviewed by Nick Pinkerton

Playtime was released a year before Blake Edwards's *The Party*, but that's the only clear advantage that I concede to Jacques Tati's masterpiece. Edwards's sole collaboration with Peter Sellers outside their *Pink Panther* series, *The Party* is every bit the equal of *Playtime* in conceptual daring and in the way it unravels the skein of order to reveal bare, beautiful anarchy underneath – and on horse laughs, I reckon it wins any contest standing up.

Sellers stars as Hrundi V. Bakshi, an Indian actor who has been imported to play a bit part in a Rudyard Kipling-type actioner. (Like Edwards's 1981 *S.O.B.*, another broadside directed towards Hollywood society, the movie begins by pulling back a film-within-a-film false front.) After Bakshi inadvertently detonates the film's set, his name is earmarked for blacklisting – but instead he winds up on the guest list for a swanky shindig that same night at the studio head's house. It's another set to destroy, this one the height of modish tackiness, with a dangerous indoor water feature, sunken living room and unlabelled control panel. Largely improvised from a flimsy script, the film riffs variations on the theme of wrong place, wrong time, wrong line and wrong colour, going with the flow like a good house band. (The swing here is provided by Henry Mancini.)

Beginning by quite literally putting the wrong foot forward – and losing a shoe – Bakshi seems to discover a new and novel social faux pas with his every move. He is all amiable curiosity, consciously grateful for the unintended invitation, but even his decency works against him, as any attempt to fix a problem creates five new ones. (As a study in aggravation gradually snowballing into catastrophe, Bakshi's bathroom bumbling matches W.C. Fields in *The Golf Specialist*.)

As with any good party, there was hell to pay afterwards, and Edwards didn't manage to make another film this radical for a very long time.

Disc: Colours appear to have faded somewhat, though that may be a mercy on the retinas – the last reel is an explosion of every shade in the polyester rainbow.

Lost and found

MARE NOSTRUM

OVERLOOKED FILMS CURRENTLY UNAVAILABLE ON UK DVD OR BLU-RAY

This tale of a besotted sailor and a Mata Hari-style spy is powered by simmering passion and psychological realism

Reviewed by Graham Fuller

Rex Ingram's 1926 *Mare Nostrum*, which depicts the Central Powers' unrestricted U-boat campaign against Allied shipping in the Mediterranean during the Great War, was the first of the five films directed by the Irish romantic stylist following his defection from Hollywood – and specifically Louis B. Mayer's control – to the Victorine studios in Nice. Shot in France, Italy and Spain (where Ingram's cinematographer John F. Seitz stood in for him), it cost MGM an astronomical \$650,000, according to Michael Powell, who apprenticed on the picture as an assistant grip and title-writer. Ingram had only two submarines at his disposal but the marine sequences and the model work that replaced footage ruined in a French lab are spectacular. However, the movie couldn't replicate the success of King Vidor's harsher 1925 WWI combat film *The Big Parade*.

The power of *Mare Nostrum* – characterised by intricate master shots, deep compositions and a psychological realism that explains why Erich von Stroheim entrusted Ingram to cut *Greed* – resides in the enslavement of the Spanish freighter captain Ulysses Ferragut (Antonio Moreno) by the Austrian spy Freya Talberg (Alice Terry). The contemporary story is contextualised by Roman antiquity and Greek mythology, Freya reincarnating the sea goddess Amphitrite. Besotted with her, Ulysses agrees to fuel the U-boat that sinks the British ship carrying his teenage son to Barcelona after the youth has tried to end his sordid affair.

Ingram's wife and regular leading lady, Terry excels as a deceptively patrician femme fatale doomed by her love for Ulysses. He first encounters her when she exits the pornographically frescoed Lupanar brothel in the ruins of Pompeii; the meeting is contrived by her stout German spymaster Dr Fedelmann (Mme Pâquerette), who is matched as a comic foil by Ulysses's devoted fatty uncle, Caragol (Hughie Mack), possibly the prototype of Benny Hill's Fred Scuttle. Ulysses then accompanies the women to Paestum, where a snake slithering into a crevice causes Freya to press herself against him and exult that it's "Neptune in serpent form". This passion renders her a reborn chthonic deity more persuasively than the tame 1920s painting of Terry as Amphitrite owned by Ulysses's uncle Triton (French strongman Apollon Uni), the man who mentored him.

In a subsequent post-coital scene at Fedelmann's rented Naples palace, the negligée-clad Freya sprays perfume on to her tongue and breathes on the sated Ulysses as they recline on a chaise; *Fifty Shades of Grey* will struggle to invent



Slave to love: Alice Terry as femme fatale Freya and Antonio Moreno as Ulysses in *Mare Nostrum*

'Fifty Shades of Grey' will struggle to invent anything so erotic as the negligée-clad Freya spraying perfume on her tongue

anything so erotic. Terry's triumph is Freya's proud march before a French firing squad in her furs and jewels – "my uniform". Her posture is erect but her defiant smile gives way to terror, the perpetual actress in her finally undone.

Adapted by Willis Goldbeck, the film was the second that Ingram made from a Vicente Blasco Ibáñez novel following 1921's *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*. The Spanish republican agitator had turned from writing acclaimed naturalist novels to lurid melodramas, the better to relay his anti-war sentiments. The fear of monstrous female sexuality in his work – he scripted *Circe, the Enchantress* (1924) for Mae Murray and wrote the novel that became Garbo's *The Temptress* (1926) – drew on the misogynistic cult in *fin-de-siècle* art and literature.

WHAT THE PAPERS SAID



'[Mare Nostrum] was the first time I realised without a doubt that there was somebody behind the camera, guiding everything, directing everything and choosing the angles. Here was somebody saying 'Look at it from here,' and making it more dramatic by the choice of angles.' David Lean

Mare Nostrum was a *roman à clef* about Mata Hari, as indicated by the novel's Freya being a Dutch officer's wife who becomes an exotic dancer in Java. As Mata Hari legendarily did, Terry's Freya also refuses a blindfold as she faces death. Ingram filmed an Ibáñez passage in which this man-hater screams orgasmically as octopuses, likened to "torpedo-boats", devour crabs in an aquarium and then clutch Ulysses in a tentacled embrace prior to kissing him gluttonously, as Terry kisses Moreno in their love nest. Ingram's aquarium sequence was cut, but Orson Welles supposedly quoted it in *The Lady From Shanghai* when juxtaposing Rita Hayworth with voracious squids. (The shaft of morning light illuminating the chamber of Ulysses's forsaken wife was meanwhile mirrored by the light that wakes Sergeant Johnson in Powell and Pressburger's *A Canterbury Tale*.)

The word 'devour' and its derivatives appear 26 times in Ibáñez's book, equating the blood-lusting Freya – who early on asks Ulysses if he likes Wagner! – with German imperialist aims. The Roman term '*mare nostrum*' ('our sea') had been revived by the Italian nationalist poet Gabriele D'Annunzio and was used by Mussolini in propaganda for his dream of a Med-based Italian empire. If tardy in portraying the late war, Ingram's epic was visionary in prophesying the rise of the Axis.

Mare Nostrum is not yet on DVD but Turner Classic Movies occasionally broadcasts it in the US and will do so on November 30. TCM's print runs 102 minutes, meaning that Ingram's 11,000ft cut (culled from a million-plus feet) was trimmed to 9,180 on Mayer's orders. Maybe Ruth Barton's upcoming Ingram biography will disclose what other glories, aside from the voracious cephalopod, landed on the cutting-room floor. 

New releases



PROVIDENCE

Alain Resnais; France 1977; Jupiter Films/Region 2
DVD: 102 minutes; 1.66:1; Features: 'A propos de Providence'
documentary, audio interview with Alain Resnais

Reviewed by David Thompson

Of all the films of Alain Resnais, who died in March, *Providence* was one of the most acclaimed. Yet recently it has also been one of the hardest to see, until the arrival of this recent restoration. It was his first film made entirely in English, employing a British and American cast, and it was written by David Mercer, best known today for his screenplays for Karel Reisz's *Morgan* (1966) and Ken Loach's *Family Life* (1971), both adapted from earlier television dramas. In France, *Providence* received the astonishing accolade of seven Césars (the Gallic Oscar). English-speaking critics, however, were divided.

Resnais, in the interview included in this release, claimed not to be English-speaking, though clearly his comprehension of the language must have been good, given his love of British theatre and Alan Ayckbourn in particular. Indeed, there is a very strong theatrical flavour to *Providence*, with its highly stylised sets, rhetorical performances and florid language. John Gielgud, in arguably his finest two hours on celluloid, is the dying author Clive Langham, whose sleepless, Chablis-sodden nights are filled with the fantasy of his new novel, which features characters to whom he is apparently related in one way or another. Dirk Bogarde is his pompous, arrogant lawyer son Claude, who fails to convict David Warner's lost soul Kevin for murder. Langham contrives to have Claude's wife Sonia (Ellen Burstyn) fall for Kevin, while finding Claude a mistress (Elaine Stritch) who uncomfortably resembles his own late wife. Resnais and Mercer throw in lycanthropy, a jogging footballer (played by Denis Lawson!) and army patrols rounding up people in a sports stadium in a reference to the *rafles* of Jews during the Occupation.

"His search for style has often resulted in a want of feeling" is a critique that Langham cites of his own writing as he constantly comments on the action and muddles the slippery logic of the drama. Of course, it's a criticism that Resnais has had to face as well, as did Mercer when his plays moved from the political to the personal and became more self-reflexive. But their trick is to pull the rug from under us with the final sequence of Langham's 78th birthday, when the colour scheme moves from cold to warm, and the characters are revealed in reality to be human after all, the acting style retuned to a sympathetic naturalism. In combination with the wonderful, melancholy score by Miklós Rózsa that we have heard throughout, the emotional undertow of the whole contrivance is suddenly laid bare. It is, of course, something of a theatrical trick in itself, but Resnais proves himself the master of the medium in making this work with such elegance and, yes, style.

Disc: Although the film is said to be 'restored' and for the most part is well graded, there is clearly more work to be done, especially on the variable soundtrack. In an unusually English-friendly edition, you can watch the film in its original English without French subtitles, or in the French dubbing (done by a distinguished cast including



Extremely loud and incredibly close: *The Shout*

Gérard Depardieu). The main documentary is sloppily made and mostly without interest. By contrast, Resnais's own interview is characteristically charming and insightful.

THE SHOUT

Jerzy Skolimowski; UK 1978; Network/Region B
Blu-ray; Certificate 15; 87 minutes; 1.85:1; Features:
commentary, Jeremy Thomas interview, textless
title background footage, trailer, gallery

Reviewed by Michael Brooke

It's fascinating to watch this and Network's *The Medusa Touch* (reviewed on page 99) back to back, as they have much in common as British supernatural horror films with top-flight casts, the biggest name (Richard Burton there, Alan Bates here) playing a sinister individual with awesomely destructive powers.

But whereas the other film never escapes the stylistic confines of a mainstream commercial thriller, *The Shout* seems off-kilter from the opening cricket match played in the grounds of a lunatic asylum (a then unknown Jim Broadbent is one of the players). Jerzy Skolimowski was second choice to Nicolas Roeg but may have been a better fit for this material: as his friend and sometime collaborator Roman Polanski achieved with South Kensington in *Repulsion* (1965), so Skolimowski turns outwardly familiar English coastal landscapes into something deeply troubling, without ever resorting to stock horror-film tropes. Instead, he finds naggingly unsettling details in unexpected crannies – a chicken trophy that's half-stuffed, half-skeletal, mounted above a selection of Francis Bacon prints in the studio of Anthony Fielding (John Hurt), a composer of electronic music who achieves his 'natural' effects by trapping bees in glass jars sealed by a microphone. And he's not even the strange one.

That dubious honour falls to Charles Crossley (Bates). First seen chatting affably to fellow cricket scorer Tim Curry about a colleague ("I make up dreams for him. I fill them with every significant symbol I can find: fathers, snakes, apple pies"), he then inveigles himself into Fielding's house,

both repelling and attracting his wife Rachel (Susannah York) before claiming to Fielding that he's mastered a shamanic shout that can kill every living creature within its range. And, in a variant of the age-old dramatic rule that a gun once seen has to be fired, this is soon put to the test.

Disc: The high-definition picture is fine but it's the sound that's all-important. Presumably deliberately, the first half is mixed at a fairly low volume level, to encourage the unwary viewer to turn up the sound and increase the shout's room-shaking impact when it happens. The commentary by Stephen Jones and Kim Newman was on the old DVD but the other extras are new, including an interview with producer Jeremy Thomas in which he reveals that he openly made the modestly budgeted film (his second) to achieve "A-grade festival exposure" rather than commercial success.

TWINS OF EVIL

John Hough; USA 1971; Network/Region B Blu-ray; 87 minutes; 1.66:1 certificate 15; Features:
original theatrical trailer and TV spots, deleted
scene, image gallery, booklet, PDF material

Reviewed by Kim Newman

The third of a trio of early-70s Hammer films based (by now, loosely) on J. Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, this adds genre revisionism to the added nudity and gore found in *The Vampire Lovers* and *Lust for a Vampire*.

The vampire Carmilla Karnstein (Katya Wyeth) appears only briefly, emerging from the tomb in a cobwebbed cowl to seduce one of her descendants, but her evil is matched by Gustav Weil (Peter Cushing), a haggard Puritan whose sect gallops about Austria directing its sexual frustrations at isolated young women and burning them as witches. Weil's twin nieces (pin-ups Madeleine and Mary Collinson), for whom he has an incestuous yen, get mixed up with each other, as the nasty girl is turned into a bloodsucker by the local count (hairy-chested yet fey Damien Thomas) and the innocent is in danger of going to the stake for her sister's crimes. Director John Hough and screenwriter Tudor Gates spice up the Hammer vampire formula with an overpopulated plot, western-style horseback action, a touch of sex, several beheadings, eroticised burnings of writhing young women and high-quality vampire disintegration scenes.

Whereas Hammer's 1950s films presented a world in which everything will be all right as long as Peter Cushing is in charge of the vampire hunting, this admits that a desire to ram stakes through provocative young women is ultimately as twisted as any amount of cloak-swishing, fang-baring and bloodsucking.

The Blu-ray shows up the occasional production shortcut and peculiar aesthetic decision (livid purple titles) but also the vigour and beauty of much of the cinematography. Harry Robinson's often-imitated score is outstanding.

Disc: Extras include hard-sell trailers ("In old Gothic Europe, they had two burning passions – witch-hunting and devil worship!"), extensive image galleries, a brief deleted scene (with a weedy, harpsichord-accompanied classroom folk song that would have added another camp touch).



Eastern star: Gong Li in Zhang Yimou's *Raise the Red Lantern* (1991)

A FEAST FOR THE SENSES

ELECTRIC SHADOWS

A Century of Chinese Cinema

Edited by James Bell, BFI, 140pp, £16.99, ISBN 9781844578498

Reviewed by James Udden

In the last few years there has been a spate of edited anthologies in English on Chinese cinema, including *The Chinese Cinema Book* (edited by Song Hwee Lim and Julian Ward; published by BFI/Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), *A Companion to Chinese Cinema* (edited by Yingjin Zhang; published by Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) and *Directory of World Cinema: China* (edited by Gary Bettinson; published by Intellect, 2012). The latest arrival is *Electric Shadows: A Century of Chinese Cinema*, published by the British Film Institute and edited by *Sight & Sound*'s James

Bell. While this is a slimmer volume than the above titles, it is arguably the most cohesive of the four, with a logical progression from start to finish in an attempt to provide a clear and concise overview of the history of Chinese cinema, plus some pertinent thematic chapters still historical in orientation. Moreover, while the other volumes include more in-depth studies of a wide range of particular topics that are of use to specialists and graduate students, *Electric Shadows* instead offers a perfect primer for those wanting to better understand Chinese cinema from a broad historical perspective. It's also particularly distinguished by being so heavily and attractively illustrated with stills and posters, some of them very rare, which again adds to its accessibility. It could serve as an ideal textbook for an undergraduate course on Chinese-language cinema.

Electric Shadows features writers with some

impressive academic pedigrees, but it is clear the authors in this case were told to keep things at a manageable length and in accessible language. Some of the contributors were directly involved in the events being depicted, such as Peggy Chiao from Taiwan and the pioneering critic and programmer Tony Rayns, who has two chapters in this volume. Also included, however, are brief commentaries by various Chinese-language filmmakers about key films that have influenced them. Feng Xiaogang, for example, contributes a very brief section on a 1964 animated film, *The Rooster Crows at Midnight*, which he is fairly sure is the first film he ever saw. A careful reader will note certain key events that multiple authors discuss, such as the 1931 KMT ban on the *wuxia* genre, the 1990 documentary *The Last Dreamers: Bumming in Beijing*, or most recently the directorial success of the star Xu Jinglei.

The first six chapters chronologically trace

the history of the six so-called 'generations' of Chinese filmmakers, although as Rayns points out, the notion of generations only became established in the late 1980s. Rayns himself covers two of the more interesting chapters, the so-called second generation of the 1930s and 1940s, and the 'independents' of current vintage who refuse to be known as the 'sixth generation'. Much here is already well known to experts, but some of the material is of interest anyhow. Chris Berry's chapter on films made during the Cultural Revolution, for example, boldly argues that cinema of that time, while much more constricted than other periods, is still more diverse than conventional histories have allowed. Most intriguing were local responses to imported contemporary films from North Korea, Albania, Yugoslavia and Romania, each of which seemed to represent a distinct genre to Chinese audiences – for example, Romanian features apparently were known as 'kissing' films.

The next three chapters cover genres (Grady Hendrix), documentaries (Kevin B. Lee and Yuqian Yan) and the all-important 'New Woman' question in the history of Chinese cinema (Bérénice Reynaud). While these seem more thematic, they are still thoroughly historical in their approach, maintaining the book's consistent tone. John Berra's chapter on current multiplex cinema ('Chinese popcorn') touches on one of the most profound issues in world cinema today: China now has the world's second-largest exhibition market. With ten screens a day being

'Electric Shadows' offers a perfect primer for those wanting to better understand Chinese cinema from a broad historical perspective

added, how will the Chinese market affect the future of everyone, including Hollywood? A more casual reader will likely realise that this is a growing force to be reckoned with.

If there is anything to be taken issue with in this volume, it is how the final two chapters by Peter Rist and Peggy Chiao, by being placed at the very end, seemingly relegate Hong Kong and Taiwan to the margins. This may reflect the current reality of these cinemas, but for a volume largely about the history of Chinese cinema this is unfortunate. Hong Kong for decades was the commercial vanguard of Chinese cinema; Taiwan in many ways was the vanguard of Chinese art cinema at film festivals. Jia Zhangke is rightfully mentioned in several chapters, whether on independent cinema, documentaries or even the essay on women and Chinese cinema. There is little doubt Jia is the most influential filmmaker within China today, yet no one bothered to mention what Jia himself openly admits: his greatest inspiration was Hou Hsiao-Hsien from Taiwan.

None of this should take away from what is a very welcome, usable and much needed historical overview of the subject. For those new to Chinese cinema, this book is a must. ⑤

MARNIE

By Murray Pomerance, BFI Film Classics/
Palgrave Macmillan, 96pp, £12.99,
ISBN 9781844576548

Reviewed by Brad Stevens

Now that *Vertigo* (1958) has been transformed from a *maudit* work into the official Greatest Film of All Time (in *Sight & Sound's* poll), *Marnie* (1964) has taken its place as Alfred Hitchcock's most problematic achievement, acclaimed as a masterpiece by specialists, yet mocked by middlebrows. The reasons for this mockery keep changing. *Marnie* was initially derided for its 'poor' technical effects, notably some painted backdrops, and later attacked for its sympathetic portrayal of a rapist, as well as its supposedly facile treatment of psychoanalysis. For admirers, these perceived flaws are misunderstood virtues. They see the backdrops as deliberate anti-realist elements that convey how events feel to the eponymous protagonist (played by Tippi Hedren), and insist that the treatment of both the central male character (Mark, played by Sean Connery) and psychiatry are far from straightforward. The conservative definition of psychoanalysis – as an institution dedicated to restoring the 'sick' patient to a 'healthy' society – is subjected to extensive criticism by Hitchcock; the relationship between psychoanalyst and patient, he suggests, is structurally identical to that between husband and wife. *Marnie's* final line – "Oh, Mark, I don't want to go to prison. I'd rather come home with you" – explicitly links marriage with penal servitude.

Unlike several other contributors to the BFI Classics series, prolific Canadian author Murray Pomerance has not set out to write a general introduction to his chosen film, instead assuming a familiarity not only with *Marnie*, but also with the various debates surrounding it. The result is a stimulating book that opens up new possibilities of interpretation. Pomerance concerns himself with background information only when it illuminates what appears on screen. While discussing the horse-riding sequences, for example, he observes that Hedren was a skilled rider; if Hitchcock chose to use glaringly artificial back-projection for certain shots, it was because he required a particular effect, not because he needed to compensate for an actor's equestrian inadequacies. Pomerance supports his assertion that *Marnie* is the director's alter ego by comparing the way Hitchcock treated those works of popular fiction he adapted for the screen with the way *Marnie* treats her various employment opportunities, "[extracting] the principal treasure without obligation – to the author's style, overall theme, or plot" (though an

unfortunate typo has resulted in the claim that Winston Graham's source novel was published in 1971, a decade after it actually appeared, and seven years after the film's release). Pomerance never loses sight of each detail's function in the overall structure. *Marnie*, he notes, is first seen "already in motion", her movement being both literal and metaphoric; she constantly tries to walk away from her past, just as she walks away from the camera at the beginning.

Although this is criticism of the highest order, I found much to disagree with. Pomerance exonerates Mark of the charge of rape, asking, "What precisely can Mark take her to mean when Marnie bellows, 'No!'?" Several possible answers are suggested, but not the one that seems to me most plausible; that Mark, like many rapists, believes 'no' means 'yes'. Pomerance sees Mark as essentially healthy, but when

'Marnie' was initially derided for its 'poor' technical effects and later attacked for its sympathetic portrayal of a rapist

Marnie insists she wants to go home with him at the end of the film, Mark's response, "Had you, love?" (rather than 'Would you, love?'), implies a disturbing neuroticism. Hitchcock has already demonstrated the significance of confusing past and present tenses ("You talk as if this was some kind of regular thing I do... did," shouts Marnie after being exposed as a thief), and Mark's slip suggests he is already growing bored with his now cured wife/patient (or tamed wild animal) whose fascination belongs to the realm of memory; he can barely even bring himself to look at her, instead nervously glancing up to make sure the rain has stopped (though he can hardly be in any doubt about that), and staring at the children singing in the street.

Marnie's ability to sustain contradictory readings is precisely what accounts for its continuing fascination. This book is a welcome contribution to the ongoing debate. ⑤



Tippi Hedren and Sean Connery in *Marnie*

THROUGH GROWN-UP EYES

Living with Childhood Fame

By Robert Henrey. Polperro Heritage Press, 200pp, £8.95, ISBN 9780957048188

Reviewed by Philip Kemp

A favourite joke while John Major was prime minister was that he was the only boy ever to run away from the circus to become an accountant. You might say as much of Robert Henrey. As eight-year-old Bobby Henrey he made his screen debut in Carol Reed's *The Fallen Idol* (1948), stealing it away from a formidable cast that included Ralph Richardson and Michèle Morgan. On the posters his name often appeared larger than those of his co-stars. The critics raved over his performance, rating it one of the finest ever given by a child actor – a verdict that still stands today. Yet Henrey made just one more film – the rarely seen *The Wonder Kid* (1951) – and then at the age of 11 quit the cinema, and acting, forever.

Now well into his 70s, Henrey still sounds bewildered at what happened to him. He seems to have spent most of his subsequent life, in accountancy and then as a deacon in the Catholic Church, in denial about his brief stardom, deeply embarrassed by “an event from which I was never fully able to escape”. Acting – let alone fame – was never any part of his game plan. Son of an English father and French mother, both writers and erratic in their parenting, he'd appeared in a cover photo on one of his mother's books; Carol Reed, seeing it, decided that Henrey was just the boy he needed. On the strength of this, the bemused lad was whisked off to London from his father's Normandy farmhouse, driven to a grand lunch



The best of youth: Carol Reed with Bobby Henrey during the making of *The Fallen Idol* (1948)

where he met Reed and Alexander Korda, then told a few weeks later that for several months he would be acting in a film. “I assumed that things like this simply happened and there was nothing very much I or anyone else could do about it.”

Readers hoping for insights into Reed's directorial technique or Richardson's acting skills will be disappointed. Henrey remembers (or allows himself to remember) little of the

shoot; his main interest was in the sets and the machinery of the process: the lamps, reflectors and booms. Sonia Dresdel and Dora Bryan were kind to him and, since he'd never visited a zoo before, the London Zoo sequence impressed him. Beyond that, this is the autobiography of a likeable, fairly ordinary man who once, by pure chance, fell into movie stardom and then, with as little volition, fell out of it again. **S**

CONSUMED

By David Cronenberg. 4th Estate, 284pp, hardback, £18.99, ISBN 9780007299157

Reviewed by Philip Concannon

Earlier this year, David Cronenberg released a short film on YouTube called *The Nest*, in which a half-naked young woman stared directly at us and tried to persuade a doctor (played by the director) that her left breast was infested with insects and had to be removed. As well as

promoting a Dutch exhibition devoted to his career, the short acted as a teaser for *Consumed*, the director's debut novel, in which breast infestations are just one of the *outré* elements that the book's parallel narratives encompass. Detours into cannibalism, self-mutilation, cancerous growths, fetishistic sex, STDs and apotemnophilia (an amputation fetish) ensure that *Consumed* should satisfy many of the director's fans who long for a return to the more visceral body horror of his earlier work.

The film *Consumed* most readily calls to mind, however, is one of Cronenberg's most underrated,

Detours into cannibalism, cancerous growths, fetishistic sex and apotemnophilia should ensure 'Consumed' satisfies fans

as it shares a fixation with the interplay between humanity and technology with his 1999 thriller *eXistenZ*. Cronenberg's constant namechecking of brands and devices is disconcerting at first, but proves apt for a story about people determined to keep up with “the inexorable hot lava flow of technology”; characters who only see the world through screens, live on the internet and exist for each other as disembodied voices on the end of the phone. Cronenberg sees us all as consumers who have in turn been devoured by the objects we desire and whose entire worldview is skewed by the gadgetry that controls us.

Much of *Consumed* is intelligent, surprising, sardonic and even strangely romantic in a Cronenberg sort of way (“I invented my own parasitoid infestation for her... I felt she deserved her own species, something that lovingly lays its eggs in her”). Problems arise in the climactic chapter when the author struggles to pull together his elaborate plot in a satisfying way, but *Consumed* proves that Cronenberg is as adept at creating vivid imagery on the page as he is on screen, and perhaps this will be a fruitful new medium for him to explore some of his more extreme and provocative ideas. Long live the new flesh. **S**



Vile bodies: David Cronenberg proves as adept at creating vivid imagery on the page as on screen

DECADES NEVER START ON TIME

A Richard Roud Anthology

Edited by Michael Temple and Karen Smolens; BFI/Palgrave Macmillan; 280pp; hardback, £65; paperback, £25.99; ISBN 9781844576258

Reviewed by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith

Richard Roud was a key figure in the art cinema culture in Britain in the 1960s, both as a writer and film programmer. He was director of programmes at the National Film Theatre, including the London Film Festival, from 1960 to 1967 and continued as director of the LFF for a further couple of years. Between 1963 and 1987 he also directed the parallel festival at the Lincoln Center in New York. From 1963 to 1969 he was the main film critic for the *Manchester Guardian* and a roving arts correspondent for the renamed *Guardian* throughout the 1970s. He was a prolific contributor to *Sight & Sound* from the late 1950s onwards. He wrote books on Jean-Luc Godard (1967), Jean-Marie Straub (1971) and Henri Langlois (1983), and edited the two-volume *Cinema: A Critical Dictionary* (1980). How he managed successfully to combine this level of productive activity with frequent trips across the Atlantic by boat (he hated flying) and some sort of private life was always something of a mystery.

The answer is that he didn't always succeed. His attempts to run two festivals in tandem didn't work out. New York didn't mind, but London did and forced him to choose. He chose New York, remaining for 20 years until he was driven out there too. In each case the new management changed the character of the festival, making it larger and more showbiz, thus destroying its unique character as a festival of the best (and only the best) of world cinema. The *Critical Dictionary* took ten

years to produce and was finished untidily and in a great rush to meet a final deadline.

A more significant question concerns his place in film culture. He was clearly marked out as a member of the film-critical establishment and what the critic Raymond Durgnat called the "Dean Street clique" – Dean Street in Soho being the then headquarters of the British Film Institute. But he was a most unlikely member of the British establishment in any field. He was always to some extent an outsider, not because he was gay (no problem in the circles he moved in) or Jewish (not much of a problem either), but because he was American and not particularly Anglophile. Born in Boston, living (most of the time) in London, his heart was always in Paris and his tastes and range of cultural references were resolutely Francocentric. He had a very restricted interest in American cinema, paying little attention to new Hollywood releases throughout the 1960s, though perking up when indie films like *Mean Streets* and *Badlands* appeared in the early 1970s. The only 'British' filmmaker he really had time for was the exiled American Joseph Losey, with whom (as with many filmmakers whose work he liked) he became a friend.

Richard was, in the best sense, an elitist. He believed that only the best films were worth writing about and only the best films were worth programming in his festivals and theatres. It didn't worry him that these best films did not form part of the culture of many of his *Guardian* readers or that his *Sight & Sound* readers might never get to see them unless they lived in London or within reach of a good film society. But at the same time

Born in Boston, living in London, Roud's heart was in Paris and his range of cultural references was resolutely Francocentric

he was completely democratic. He assumed that his readers would want to see the films if they got the chance and he set out to communicate his enthusiasm for, say, *La Règle du jeu*, in a way that would fire the enthusiasm of others. His essay on that film is perhaps not the best thing ever written about it, but it is probably the piece of writing most likely to get the reader to drive the 25 miles or so from Accrington to Manchester in the hope of catching it. There were other good writers in the 'clique' – John Russell Taylor, for example, or David Robinson – but none could match Richard's freshness or passion to communicate. He had the great quality of being able to pinpoint some detail of what was happening between the characters and how the director had captured it.

He also liked the new, whether it was new and different, or new to him, or just new because it was happening now. He wholeheartedly embraced the novelty of the French New Wave and the other new waves that followed it, auteur theory, and the general radicalism of the 1960s, not just in cinema. He was unhesitating in his enthusiasm for Godard when others were full of ifs and buts and he bridged the mainstream and the counterculture in his championing of Straub and Huillet.

The new anthology put together by Michael Temple and Richard's niece Karen Smolens gives a vivid picture of the sort of writer he was and, behind the writer, of the man himself, who died of a heart attack in 1989. In addition to published writings it includes drafts of an unpublished memoir and the first chapters of an uncompleted biography of François Truffaut. The memoir was mainly about the role of film festivals in spreading the new film culture of the 1960s. It would have been a great book, but by 1984, when Richard had finally got enough material together to show his editor, film culture had changed and so had publishing. To posterity's loss, the publisher turned it down. ☹



Hommes du cinéma: Richard Roud (right) with Jean Renoir (centre) and National Film Theatre controller Leslie Hardcastle at the NFT in London in April 1962

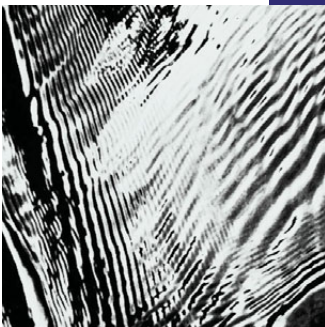


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The T-shirts featured are inspired by: 1: Raiders of the Lost Ark, 02: Jaws, 03/04: Dredd, 05: Back to the Future, 06: Alien, 07: Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, 08: Escape from New York, 09: Aliens, 10: The Lost Boys, 11: The Texas Chainsaw Massacre, 12: Back to the Future, 13: Star Wars, 14: Aliens, 15: The Fog, 16: Goodfellas, 17: Westworld, 18: The Omen, 19: The Man Who Fell From Earth, 20: Leon, 21: Donnie Darko, 22: Every Which Way But Loose, 23: Cuban Fury, 24: Starship Troopers, 25: The Shining, 26: The Return of the Living Dead, 27: Berberian Sound Studio, 28: The Last Starfighter, 29: Blade Runner, 30: Robocop, 31: Predator, 32: Sightseers, 33: Kill List, 34: Old Boy, 35: Fictional Spacecrafts, 36: The Dark Knight, 37: Raiders of the Lost Ark, 38: Local Hero, 39: Dog Soldiers, 40: Army of Darkness, 41: Blade Runner, 42: Soylent Green, 43: Shaun of the Dead, 44: Alien, 45: Jurassic Park, 46: Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom, 47: Withnail and I, 48: The Thing, 49: Troll Hunter, 50: Enter the Dragon, 51: 2001: A Space Odyssey, 52: Jaws, 53: Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?, 54: Close Encounters of the Third Kind, 55: Robots, 56: Fargo, 57: Raiders of the Lost Ark, 58: Alien 3, 59: Dead Man's Shoes, 60: They Live, 61: A Field in England, 62: The Terminator, 63: Rocky, 64: Ghostbusters, 65: American Psycho, 66: Big Lebowski, 67: The Goonies, 68: Back to the Future, 69: An American Werewolf in London, 70: The Godfather, 71: Blade Runner, 72: The Usual Suspects.

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READERS' LETTERS

Letters are welcome, and should be addressed to the Editor at *Sight & Sound*, BFI, 21 Stephen Street, London W1T 1LN Fax: 020 7436 2327 Email: S&S@bfi.org.uk

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Michael Bailey's comments about foreign-language films at Edinburgh's Cameo Cinema being limited to the Discover Tuesdays strand are completely wrong ('Hobson's choice', Letters, *S&S*, September). The weekly strand throws a spotlight on non-mainstream titles but not exclusively foreign-language ones. Foreign-language pictures continue to have regular screenings (recent titles include *Mood Indigo*, *Grand Central* and *Venus in Fur*).

Neil Hepburn marketing manager, Cameo Cinema

BROUGHT TO BOOK

Might I correct Philip French's assertion, in his very interesting review of J.E. Smyth's new book on Fred Zinnemann ('Moral tales', Books, *S&S*, October), that, prior to this volume, "the only book-length studies he has engendered are a couple of academic symposiums and the autobiography"? I wrote a critical monograph on the director's films, *Fred Zinnemann: Films of Character and Conscience*, which was published by McFarland in 2003 and which covered all of his feature films as well as some of the shorts. Part of the impetus behind it was precisely the feeling that French expresses when he says Zinnemann has not received the attention that is his due. I know (from the interviews I had with him) that Zinnemann was deeply wounded by this critical neglect. I hope Smyth's book will help to go some way towards a reclamation of a fine director.

Neil Sinyard University of Hull

TOUGH CHOICES

It must have been a moment of mental absence to have omitted *Sunset Blvd.* from the top ten list of Hollywood satires (Listomania, *S&S*, October), but I would also humbly submit that either *The Bad and the Beautiful* or *Two Weeks in Another Town* is superior to *State and Main*, and Christopher Guest's earlier *The Big Picture* far more adroit than his disappointing *For Your Consideration*. I have not seen *Bamboozled* or *Bowfinger*, but I am sure either one could make room for Billy Wilder at his peak.

David Clare Ipswich

WINNER'S NO LOSER

Why is it the norm to look down on Michael Winner at every opportunity? Nick Pinkerton, reviewing three films starring Charles Bronson (Home Cinema, *S&S*, October), routinely slips into what has become the film media's default position on his directorial abilities. We even get the customary swipe at Winner's later incarnation as a restaurant critic. The truth is, *Death Wish* and its egregious sequels are but a tiny part of the story. Although I'm not expecting an *S&S* retrospective any time soon, Winner, across a chequered career, made at least half a dozen excellent films. *Chato's Land* is a solid 70s western that stands comparison with the justly feted *Ulyana's Raid* and *Monte Walsh*. *Hannibal Brooks* is a charming WWII story imbued with the spirit of the 1960s. And the woefully unsung *Lawman*

LETTER OF THE MONTH THINK INSIDE THE BOX



I was delighted to read your feature article on the Greatest Documentaries of All Time ('Tall truths', *S&S*, September), but I couldn't help lamenting the small number of documentaries from television to have made the list. The groundbreaking *The World at War* (above) and

anything by Ken Burns, along with many other TV programmes, rival the quality and interest achieved by the features included in your survey. Perhaps a future issue of *S&S* could deal with the merits of TV documentaries.

Robert Crymble North Vancouver, Canada

is an engagingly rich and morally ambiguous western, the dark climax of which surprises the audience even more than the protagonists.

Steve Barker by email

SPEED DATING

I'm sure I won't be the only *Sight & Sound* reader who spotted the error in Bryony Dixon's recent article (Primal Screen, *S&S*, October): the Mitchell and Kenyon cache of films was unearthed in 1994, not 2005. It was the resultant TV series, *The Lost World of Mitchell & Kenyon*, that aired in 2005.

Oliver Coombes by email

THE WORLD AT WAR

I particularly enjoyed reading your report from Bologna ('Time regained', *S&S*, September), as it gave me a chance to relive my festival experience.

However, James Bell describes *Hitler's Reign of Terror* as "astonishingly clear-sighted", based on the programme dating of 1933. Nicola Mazzanti, who introduced the film, claimed that the commentary we heard had only been slightly updated in 1939, but I do not see how even that could be correct. The said commentary, by Edwin C. Hill, uses at least twice the expression 'World War' in a way that assumes his audience will be familiar. In one case he refers to "the last World War", in the sense of the *previous* World War. But the expressions 'World War I' and 'World War II' did not become part of the English language on 3 September 1939, particularly in America, which considered itself in the greater half of the world that was not, then, at war. My research suggests that some of the earliest uses of the expression 'World War' were in *Asia* magazine. In July 1940, the Great War is referred to as "the first world war", and in August 1940 there is an article, 'Asia in the Second World

War'. At that stage they appear to be breaking in a new concept and the use of the expression as a recognisable label has to be a little after that.

At the screening, Mazzanti helpfully updated his entry in the catalogue to say that the film – abandoned in a Belgian store – was likely to have been from an attempt to import it in 1948. Apparently the versions from the 1930s are no longer extant in America and the version we saw – or heard – could be neither of them.

Roger Macy London

WRITER'S CRAMP

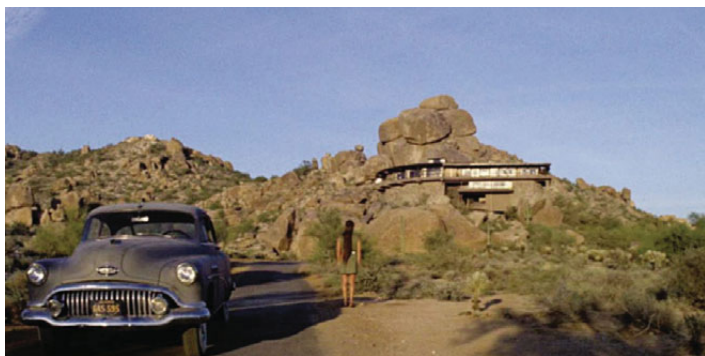
One of the many joys of reading David Thomson ('Sinister cinema', *S&S*, August) is disagreeing with him. Jimi Hendrix isn't on his list of left-handed geniuses and I'd like to mention him here; not for his genius, but for his extraordinary physical grace. No one ever looked so right playing the guitar as did the lefty Hendrix. But he might well have looked "cramped, introverted or even neurotic" while he was writing, especially if he had been a character in *North by Northwest* using a fountain pen. But this is only because he would have been constantly trying not to smudge what he had just written. Left-handed writers are not clumsier, they are just the victims of a left-to-right script devised by righties for their own convenience.

Paul Cunningham South Korea

Additions and corrections

October p.67 *Get On Up* Certificate 12A 138m 45s; p.76 *The Last Impresario* Certificate 15 92m 24s; p.78 *Life of Crime* Certificate 15 98m 46s; p.83 *Palo Alto* Certificate 15 100m 28s; p.84 *Salomé* Certificate 15 80m 52s; p.88 *A Walk Among the Tombstones*, Certificate 15 113m 35s; p.91 *Wilde Salomé*, Certificate 15 95m 50s
September p.95 *Moebius* Not submitted for theatrical classification. Video certificate: 18, running time: 88m 42s; p.96 *Mystery Road* Certificate 15 120m 54s

ZABRISKIE POINT



Antonioni's assault on the American Dream finishes on an uplifting note of clarity and liberating destructiveness

By Nick Pinkerton

I had a professor at university who used to refer to a spot in certain films which he called "the arthouse moment". This is the moment in a challenging movie right before the 'Fin' or 'Fine' or whatever pops on-screen when that mythical beast, the average viewer, who has up until now suspected that he has no idea what is going on finds out without a doubt that this is the case. This is when the smarty-pants start rolling out their readings. And I do not believe any filmmaker has so excelled in producing these moments as Michelangelo Antonioni.

The first I can think of is Ettore Manni on the station platform in *Le Amiche* (1955), avoiding a final rendezvous with Eleonora Rossi Drago, hiding behind a railway timetable or a rolling book cart, these obfuscating objects, these things. That is followed by another more famous broken appointment in 1962's *L'Eclisse*, when lovers Alain Delon and Monica Vitti both fail to show at their usual meeting place, and for more than five minutes we see passers-by and objects at that meeting place carrying on without them, still more indifferent things.

The MGM-produced, big-budget *Zabriskie Point* was Antonioni's first and only foray into the New World, and the experience seems appropriately to have coarsened him – as reflected in the movie's kicker. The film concerns Mark (Mark Frechette), a student discontent who, under suspicion of killing a cop during a campus protest, lights out of Los Angeles in a stolen Cessna 210 prop plane. While flying over the desert, he swoops down to hook up with Daria (Daria Halprin), a girl about

his age who's en route to Phoenix in a 1952 Buick Special tourback sedan. Daria is going to meet her boss, real-estate developer Lee Allen (Rod Taylor), but she makes time for a sexy and spiritual diversion with Mark. In the end Mark decides to return to LA, but doesn't make it any further than the runway before he's hit with a police fusillade. Daria hears the news of Mark's death on the radio as she's arriving at her boss's house, a site-specific work growing out of the declivity of a red rock formation, built by Frank Lloyd Wright protégé Hiram Hudson Benedict. Once there, Daria finds that she is no longer willing or able to play the role expected of her. She heads back to the car, presumably to return to the desert, but before she leaves, she goes to get one last look at the house in the gathering dusk. And as she looks at the house it, and everything in it, explodes.

The house, or rather a very good facsimile of it, explodes over and over again – the blast was covered by 17 cameras – with a grandeur equal to *Apocalypse Now*'s napalm blossoms. A patio set, racks of clothing, a colour TV, and a library full of books all go airborne. A refrigerator, too, and a whole pantry, sending a loaf of Wonder bread, an uncooked chicken and a great big lobster hurtling end over end. Exquisite slow motion holds the items suspended, revolving in space, as a floaty acid-rock instrumental by a young English band called 'The Pink Floyd' breaks into outright thrash. (The group also soundtracked the film's opening, a meeting of student radicals that's rendered as a muddle of righteous babble.)

The music drops off abruptly on a hard cut back to Daria, now smiling. She returns to the

The house explodes over and over again with a grandeur equal to the napalm blossoms in 'Apocalypse Now'

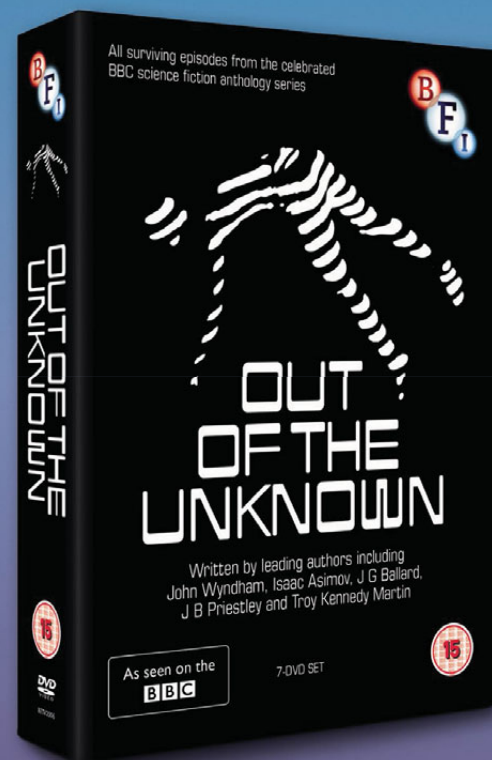
car and drives away, leaving the camera to pan to an orange and purple desert sunset while David Gilmour's guitar is faded back into the mix. A persistent but unverifiable and rather suspect rumour has it that the movie was meant to end with an airplane either skywriting or carrying a banner emblazoned with the phrase "Fuck You, America!" Even as it is, this anti-consumerist apocalypse makes for Antonioni's least oblique, most accessible ending: "Fuck Your Stuff." If you didn't know why or how all of this is happening – and I'm not strictly certain that I do – you'd have a hard time not at least being wowed by it. The Canadian sketch comedy programme SCTV had a recurring skit in which Jim Flaherty and John Candy played two big country bumpkins hosting a show called *Farm Film Report*, rating movies solely on the criterion of whether things "blowed up real good" in them. Even Big Jim and Billy liked *Zabriskie Point*!

The pow-crash-boom grand finale is curiously touching, as *Zabriskie Point*, in its complicated attempt to engage with the wilful naivety of youthful utopianism, is touching among Antonioni's films. Daria's detonation of the desert house is the moment when one of Antonioni's people has revenge on the structures and objects that usually dominate them and enjoy the last word, even if that revenge is strictly imaginary – and we must assume that this is the case, unless Daria has just developed telekinetic powers, a sort of proto-*Carrie*. This moment is also more than a little ironic, for Daria seems to have learned something from her boss and the rapacious culture of development he represents – the gorgeous art deco Richfield Tower, visible outside his office, had already been demolished by the time *Zabriskie Point* hit theatres. At the moment when she participates in the destruction of heritage which was at that moment masquerading as 'renewal', she couldn't possibly be more all-American. ☺

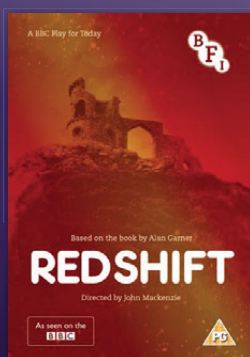
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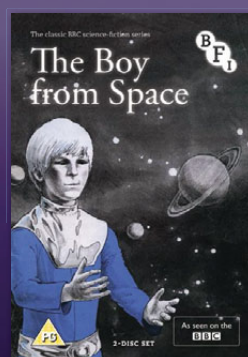
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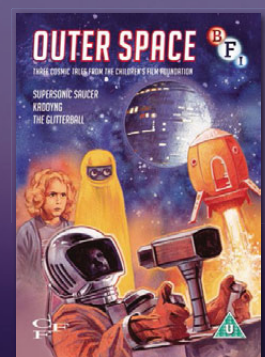
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